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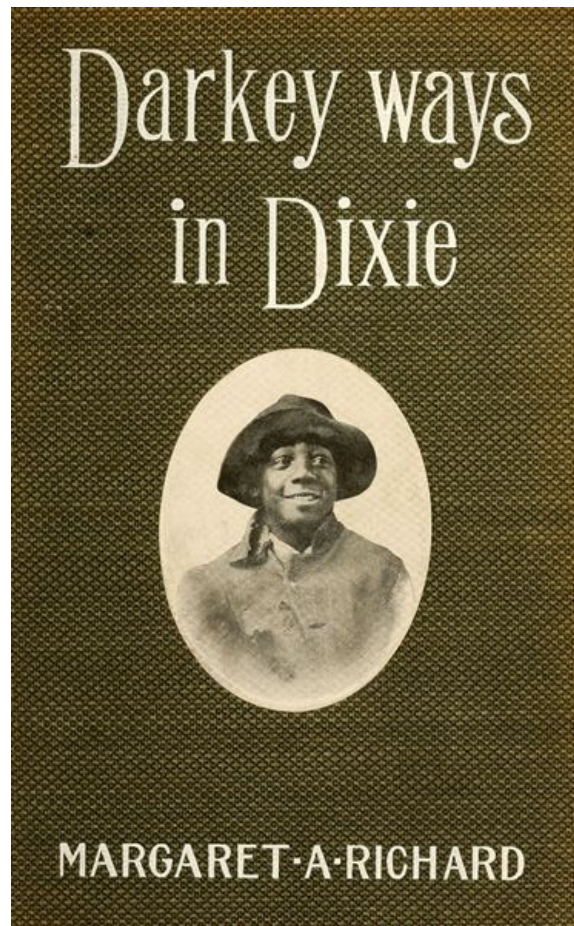
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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK DARKEY WAYS IN DIXIE ***





A Charleston Ground-nut Woman.

DARKEY WAYS IN DIXIE



BY
MARGARET A. RICHARD

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	PAGE
Mammy's Baby Chile	5
Playin' Craps	7
The Washerwoman's Song	9
A Seller ob Ole Clo'es	11
A Well-Cleaner's Revery	13
Song of the Huckster	15
By-en-By	18
In Season ob Mistletoe	21
Christmas Gif'	24
Snow in the South	26
Aunty's Affliction	28
The Difference	30
Blackberry Time	32
Dat Jew's-Harp	33
Wid his Feet	35
The Broken Banjo	37
When Dey Sing	39
At de Meetin'	41
A Philosopher	46
Des de Same	49
So de Sunshine Stay	50
Daddy Long Legs	51
His Capacity Filled	52
Ike's Temptation	54
Whar de Watermilyun Grow	57
What his Education Done	59
Booker T. Washington	62
Crazy Joe's Ambition	65
Grinnin' Jake	67
Elmiry Vaccinated	69
Simple Simon	72
An Obstacle Overcome	73
Two of a Kind	75
Quarantined	77
A Puzzling Clause	79
'Fo'e de Wah	80
Groun'-Hog Day	85
Excusable	87
Jeff's Fun'ral Sermon	88
Uncle Bob to his Dog	90
A Prophecy	92
'Possum en Pertatoes	93
Cotton's Comin' In	96
Dat Yaller Gal	97
Ter Walk wid his Gal	101
Cunjud	103
Uncle Ben's Superstition	104
Wid de Witches	106
A Restless Spirit	108
Pardoned	111

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

	PAGE
A Charleston Ground-Nut Woman	Frontispiece
“I rub en I rub”	10
“Vegtibles”	16
“En he drive a ox so slow”	18
The Boot-Black	32
The Wood-Sawyer	46
Grinnin’ Jake	68
“How de News git roun dem posts”	74
“On de Chain Gang”	110

DARKEY WAYS IN DIXIE.

[Pg 5]

Mammy’s Baby Chile.

Hush, now hush, do’ cry no mo’
Kaze yo’ daddy had ter go
In de massa’s fiel’ ter hoe,
Mammy’s baby chile.

He gwine come back, dat you’ll see,
Kaze he b’long ter you en me,
En he’ll jog you on his knee,
Mammy’s baby chile.

Hush, den hush, do’ cry no mo’!
Set dar quiet on de flo’
While I wash de clo’es, you know,
Mammy’s baby chile.

When de cotton season come,
Me en you won’ stay at home,
Kaze yo’ mammy gwine pick some,
Mammy’s baby chile.

[Pg 6]

You kin set in de sunshine
On de cotton, sof’ en fine,
Lis’nin’ ter de moanin’ pine,
Mammy’s baby chile.

When we done, at en’ ob day,
En come home (heah what I say!)
Daddy’ll ride you all de way,
Mammy’s baby chile.

Hush, den hush, do’ cry no mo’
Kaze yo’ daddy had ter go
In de massa’s fiel’ ter hoe,
Mammy’s baby chile.

Playin’ Craps.

[Pg 7]

What you git dat nickel change
Up in coppers fo’,
What de preacher gib ter you
Las’ night ’fo’e he go?

Bet you soon be wid dem chaps
Roun' de corner playin' craps.

What you say? You done bin dar?
Is you, nigger, sho?
Den de Black Maria git you
Sho's de pleeceman know
'Bout dem dirty little chaps
Roun' de corner playin' craps.

What you gwine make up ter tell
Preacher Jones, Eli,
When he as' you 'bout dat nickel—
When, en how, en why?
Dat you los' it ter dem chaps
Roun' de corner playin' craps?

[Pg 8]

Neber los' it? Well, I say!
Why you talk so slow?
Bring dat money out ter sight,
So I sho kin know
If you 'scape dem cunnin' chaps
Roun' de corner playin' craps.

Thirteen ob dem! Thirteen coppers,
Sho ez I'm erlive!
Han' dem ebry one to me—
Scusin ob des five;—
En you stay 'way frum them chaps
Roun' de corner playin' craps!

The Washerwoman's Song.

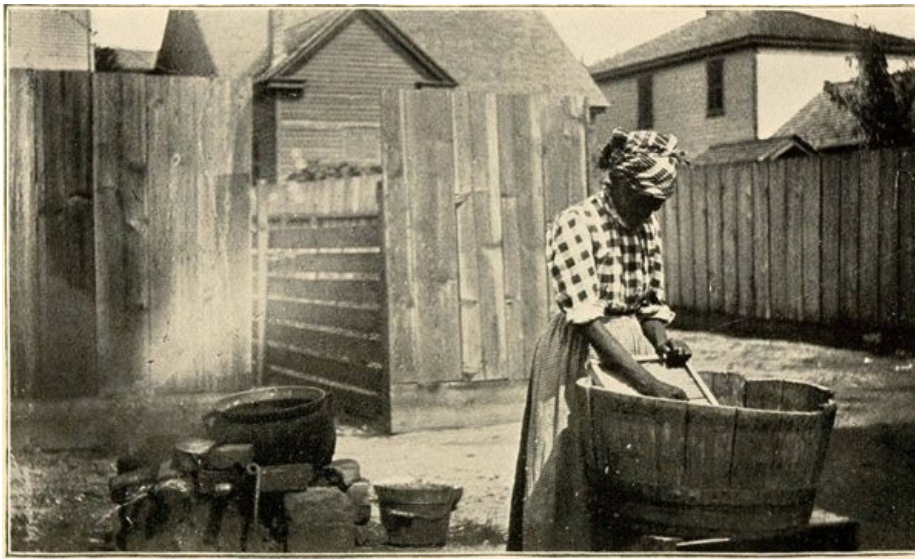
[Pg 9]

Oh, I rub en I rub
All day in de tub!
I went fo' dese clo'es 'fo'e de clock strike eight,
En I rubbin' on dem in de evenin' late.
I rub en I rub
All day in de tub.

Oh, I rub en I rub
All day in de tub!
I soap all de pieces in places erbout,
En I scrub till I git all de dinginess out.
I rub en I rub
All day in de tub.

Oh, I rub en I rub
All day in de tub!
Sho ez de good Missus pay me fo' dese
I gwine treat you chillun ter crackers en cheese.
Ain't you glad I kin rub
All day in de tub?

[Pg 10]



"I rub en I rub!"

A Seller Ob Ole Clo'es.

[Pg 11]

Dese am pretty clo'es, fo' true,
 En I'll sell 'em quick fo' you,
 Dat I will!
 Dey does look des lak you, Miss,
 En I feel dat I could kiss
 Ebry frill.

Dis heah flower on dis hat—
 Lan'! My heart do cry fo' dat—
 It so sweet!
 I would sholy lak ter go
 Wid it on my head, des so,
 Down de street.

"Buy it, den, yo'se'f," you say?
 Now, you know dat I cain't pay
 Fo' dat hat!
 Sellin' clo'es ain't made me rich,
 But my head do sholy itch
 To weah dat.

[Pg 12]

If dem niggers come en pay
 Allers fo' de clo'es dey say
 Dey gwine git,
 I would hab de change ter buy
 Somethin' when my heart do cry
 So fo' it.

Ten cents on de dollar, Miss,
 Won' buy soon a hat lak dis,
 Dat am sho;
 En dis nigger hab ter eat—
 Hab ter buy some bread en meat,
 Ez you know.

Well, good-day! Dese pretty clo'es,
 Wid dey laces en dey bows,
 Soon be gone;
 Kaze dem gals, when dey heah tell
 Dat I got yo' clo'es ter sell,
 Sho gwine run.

The Well-Cleaner's Revery.

[Pg 13]

Me en Tom bin cleanin' wells
 Long time, sho;
En we'll clean 'em till God tells
 Us ter go
Up dar whar de shinin' stream,
 Pu' en sweet,
Flow frue heaven, lak a dream,
 At our feet.

En I min' me how us two,
 Ez time pass,
Work togedder good, fo' true,
 Fus' en las';
One stay up en one go down,
 En bofe know
Dey mus' fill dey place, I boun',
 High or low.

When Tom turn de win'lass roun',
 En I go
Fur down underneath de groun',
 Dark en low,
I trus' allers dat he gwine
 Draw me out
Ter de place whar de sun shine
 All erbout.

En I b'lieve dat if a man
 Fall in sin,
We mus' lif' him, if we kin,
 Up ag'in;
Kaze he need de he'pin' han',
 Dat am sho,
If all safe he rise en stan'
 Any mo'.

God done take dis simple way
 Ter show me
Dat while in de worl' we stay
 We must be
'Pendent on each other, sho,
 Till we rise
Frum de dang'rous deeps below
 Ter de skies.

[Pg 14]

Song Of the Huckster.

[Pg 15]

I don' ride erlong de street
 Wid my mouth shet tight,
Kaze I know I got ter sing,
 Lak a singer right,
If I make dis pile ob goods
 Dwindle frum de sight:

 "Tomatoes en okra
 Passin' right by!
 Beans en pertatoes—
 De prices ain't high!
 Apples en peaches,
 De fines' ter-day!
 Oh, come out en buy
 'Fo'e dey all git away—
 Come out en buy!"

All de white men down de street
 Wantin' me, fo' sho,
Des to drive en sell fo' dem,
 Kaze dey say dey know
I git rid ob all my truck,
 Singin' ez I go:

[Pg 16]

“Tomatoes en okra
Passin’ right by!
Beans en pertatoes—
De prices ain’t high!
Apples en peaches,
De fines’ ter-day!
Oh, come out en buy
’Fo’e dey all git away—
Come out en buy!”

Once de preacher what hol’ fo’t h
Fo’ de Methodis’,
Say: “Oh, man, I b’l’ eve dat you
Done yo’ callin’ miss!
Why’n’t you use dat voice ter preach
’Stead ob shoutin’ dis:



“Vegtibles.”

“Tomatoes en okra
Passin’ right by!
Beans en pertatoes—
De prices ain’t high!
Apples en peaches,
De fines’ ter-day!
Oh, come out en buy
’Fo’e dey all git away—
Come out en buy!”

[Pg 17]

En I laugh en tell him dat
Dis town full ter-day
Ob fine men, des lak hisse’f,
What kin preach en pray;
But dey ain’t but one dat go
Singin’ ’long dis way:

“Tomatoes en okra
Passin’ right by!
Beans en pertatoes—
De prices ain’t high!
Apples en peaches,
De fines’ ter-day!
Oh, come out en buy
’Fo’e dey all git away—
Come out en buy!”

By en By.

Uncle Reuben, ole en good,
 Come ter town wid nice fat wood
 Frum de san' hills fur away—
 'Mos' eleben miles, dey say.
 En he drive a ox so slow,
 En a cart dat wobble so,
 Dat it look lak dey gwine fall,
 En ole Uncle gwine lose all,
 By en by, by en by.

Uncle got dat wood dervide,
 En in hones' bundles tied,
 En he holler 'cross de fence:
 "Three big bunches fo' ten cents!
 Buy some, Missus, please, frum me,
 Kaze I need de change, you see;
 En I mus' go down de street
 Ter git me some meal en meat,
 By en by, by en by.



"En he drive a ox so slow."

Missus say she don' want none;
 What he brought befo' ain't gone;
 En ole Uncle pass on by,
 Still wid courage in his eye;
 En he doan' lose heart dat day,
 But wid smilin' face he say:
 "I ain't bin all 'roun' de town—
 I gwine sell it, I am boun',
 By en by, by en by."

En he sell it all, fo' true,
 Ez he said dat he would do!
 When at las' he go down street,
 He buy mo' dan meal en meat,
 Kaze he lak terbacco, too,
 Well ez any nigger do;
 En he say: "I'll 'joy it, sho,
 Ez erlong de road I go,
 By en by, by en by."

When he 'bout ter leave de town
 Ez de sun am gwine down,
 Us black niggers laugh en say:
 "Bet you won't git home ter-day

Wid dat ox, so ole en slow,
En dat cart dat wobble so!"
En he bow his head en say:
"I gwine git dar, anyway,
By en by, by en by."

[Pg 20]

Uncle Reuben's gittin' ole—
He's pas' sixty, I'se bin tole;
En his han' sho shake ter-day
In a weak en trimblin' way;
En his ole legs wobbled too,
Lak de wheels ob his cart do,
Ez he say: "De en' soon come,
Kaze de Lawd gwine call me home,
By en by, by en by."

In Season Ob Mistletoe.

[Pg 21]

Dat Sambo ain't got good sense;
Work agin hisse'f for sho;
'Tain't no parable I'm tellin',
'Tis de truf, en dat am so.
He wus 'ployed by Missus Johnsing
Ter run erran's en bring wood;—
Ter do anything, in fac',
Roun' de place a nigger could;
En Sambo, he done right well
Till de boys begin ter sell
Bunches ob de mistletoe.

'Twus de Chris'mas time ercomin',
En it tingled in his blood,
Till he couldn't stick ter sawin'
En ter choppin' ob de wood;
En he couldn't heah de Missus
When she say: "Be smart, Sambo!"
Kaze de soun' ob dem boys callin'
In de street wus all he know;
En a nigger stop en say:
"We is lucky, sho, ter-day;
We des sells de mistletoe!"

[Pg 22]

Sambo didn't stop ter say:
"'Scuse me, Missus, I mus' go!"
Do his po' ole mammy teach him
Better manners, dat you know.
He des leave dat yard en clim'
Up de neares' ole oak tree,
Whar de mistletoe wus growin'
Fresh en green ez it could be;
En he jine dem boys dat cry:
"Mistletoe er passin' by!
Don' you want some mistletoe?"

En he sell it mighty good—
He des scoop de nickles in!
Seem de Lawd wus blessin' him
In his foolishness en sin.
Dar de Missus wus er needin'
Him ter chop en bring in wood,
En he orter gone en done it—
Kaze she sho bin mighty good,
But he strut erlong de street,
Hol'rin' out: "It's hard to beat
Dis fine bunch ob mistletoe!"

[Pg 23]

But de jedgment come at las',
Ez it boun' ter come, fo' sho,
When a nigger work agin
His ownse'f, lak dat Sambo.
When de holidays wus pas'

Missus say dat she don' need
Him to work no mo' fo' her,
Kaze she got some one instead.
En dat boy got sense ter know
White folks don' buy mistletoe
When de season am done pas'!

Chris'mas Gif'!

[Pg 24]

I go tip-toe down de alley
Ter de Missus' kitchen do',
Kaze I know she got some Chris'mas
Somewhar fo' dis darkey, sho;
She don' spec' me roun' dat way,
En I s'prise her when I say:
"Chris'mas gif'!"

Den she turn roun', des er laughin',
En she say: "De same ter you!
Is you got a present fo' me?
Kaze I want one—I sho do!"
"You's des foolin'," den I say;
"Sides I hollered fus dis day:
'Chris'mas gif'!"

Den she git a big bandanna—
One wid po'ka dots ob red,
En she say: "Ez you done ketch me,
You kin hab dis fo' yo' head."
So I sho am glad dis day
Dat I wus de fus ter say:
"Chris'mas gif'!"

[Pg 25]

Snow in the South.

[Pg 26]

Dis mornin' when I went ter po'
Water out my cabin do',
I wus sho surprised ter see,
While de darkness all roun' me,
Snow wus des er fallin' down
Till it civered all de groun'.

Bin des 'bout two yeahs or mo'
Sence I seed a flake ob snow;
En I call to Mandy: "Say!
Heah's a sight, fo' sho, ter-day!
Yestiday was lak de spring;
Look what des one night done bring."

En she come en poke her head
Out from under dat ole shed;
En she say: "When you go down
Ter de Massa's in de town,
You mus' civer up yo' back
Wid a nice warm crocus sack."

[Pg 27]

En she say: "Yo' shoes am ole;
Sho dey days am neahly tole."
En she wrap 'em, fo'th en back,
Wid dem bits ob crocus sack,
Till you hardly see my feet
When I walk erlong de street.

Massa p'int ter dem en say:
"Wouldn't dress up dat erway!
Why'n't you git some rubber shoes?
You could buy 'em if you choose."

But I won't! Kaze don't I know
Soon de sun gwine drink dat snow?

[Pg 28]

Aunty's Affliction.

How is I dis mornin', Miss?
Po'ly, dat am true!
In de night-time I don' sleep
Lak I orter do,
Kaze I got de miz'ry bad
In me, up en down,
En some day, fo' sho, it gwine
Fetch me ter de groun'.

Oh, I's full ob trouble, Miss!—
Full ez I kin be.
Ain't you got some liniment
You kin gib ter me?
I is 'bleeged ter git some he'p
Somewhar, dat am sho,
Else dis miz'ry in de j'int
Soon gwine lay me low.

Oh, I thank you, thank you, Miss!
God will bless you, sho.
All de goodness ob yo' heart
He mus' sholey know;
En he'll pay you when at las'
He done lay me down;—
When dis pain en miz'ry done
Fetch me ter de groun'.

[Pg 29]

The Difference.

[Pg 30]

If de white man am a sinner
He go walkin', walkin' free,
But de nigger lan', fo' sho,
In de penitentiary.

Now dat Simeon steal some cotton
(Cunjud by de evil one)
En dey sen' him ter de prison
Fo' de wrong dat he am done.

Fo' three yeahs he done bin workin'
In de penitentiary,
En he got ter stay dar longer
Frum de chillun en frum me.

Dat rich farmer git de cotton—
Ebry poun' ob it—ag'in,
But dey keep dat Simeon lock up
Lak he done an awful sin.

[Pg 31]

If de white man am a sinner
He go walkin', walkin' free,
But de nigger sho gwine lan'
In de penitentiary.

Blackberry Time.

[Pg 32]

Missus, please write me a letter back home,
En tell 'em I say dat I want 'em ter come

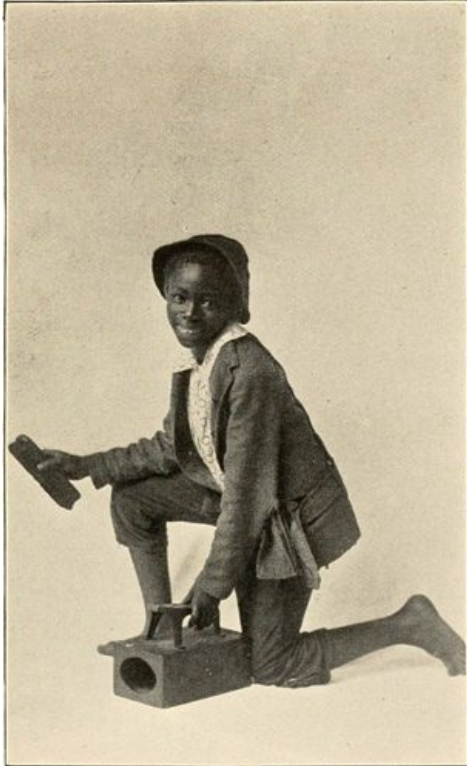
At blackberry time in June.

My little ole cabin won't hol' any mo',
But nobody freeze in de yard, dat am sho,
At blackberry time in June.

Tell 'em I lonesome. I sholy will die
If dey don' come to he'p me eat blackberry pie
At blackberry time in June.

Dis nigger am po', but dar's plenty to eat
When de fruit ebrywhar hangin' juicy en sweet
At blackberry time in June.

So, Missus, please write me a letter back home,
En tell 'em I say dat I want 'em ter come
At blackberry time in June.



THE BOOT-BLACK.

"No, sah ree!
You do'n' ketch me
Shinin' yo' shoes fo' de ha'f ob a
dime;
Dis nigger belong
Ter de union strong,
En he charge you de full price ebry
time."

Dat Jew's Harp.

I does try ter fetch up Jim
So de white folks respec' him;
But in spite ob all I say
He des set out dar all day
On de back do' step, en play
Dat jew's harp.

De fus job he git ter do,
I wus glad, it sho am true;
But he come home, sleek en sly,
Wid de sunshine in his eye,
Soon's he git enough ter buy

Dat jew's harp.

"You black nigger, you!" I say,
"Whar yo' senses gone ter-day?
Don't you know when niggers eat
Dey mus' 'arn dey bread en meat?"
But he des play, sof' en sweet,
Dat jew's harp.

[Pg 34]

When I tell ole Missus once
Jim wus des a lazy dunce,
She say: "Hush! Don' talk dat way;
He's a ginious, I dare say,
En de muses bid him play
Dat jew's harp."

Pshaw! De ginious en de muses!
What's de use ob dem ixcuses?
If I hab ter flog dat Jim
Wid a great big hick'ry lim',
Bet he'll frow away frum him
Dat jew's harp!

Wid His Feet.

[Pg 35]

When I git down my banjo
Des to pick a tune or so,
Tobin 'gin ter pat de flo'
Wid his feet.

He don't neber heah me play
In de night-time or de day,
But he sho gwine ac' dat way
Wid his feet.

En he pat, now fas', now slow;—
Easy now, den loud, he go,
Keepin' time ter my banjo
Wid his feet.

En who ever heah dat coon
Allers say, en dat right soon:
"He kin play a purty tune
Wid his feet."

[Pg 36]

He kin make mo' music, sho,
Dan I kin wid my banjo
When he pat de cabin flo'
Wid his feet.

De Broken Banjo.

[Pg 37]

In dis little ole log cabin
Whar de gray moss hang in sight;
Whar de screech-owl make me trimble
In de middle ob de night;
Dar at ebenin' you gwine fin' me,
If you look fo' me at all,
Wid my Fido settin' by me,
En my banjo on de wall.

Once, when de long day wus finish,
'Fo'e ter res' me I done go,
I would set out on de do' step
Pickin' sof' my ole banjo,
Singin' "Dixie," "Swanee Riber,"
"Annie Laurie," en dem all;—

But my banjo am done broken,
En am hangin' on de wall.

So I set heah dreamin', dreamin',
Ob de time dat use ter be
'Fo'e my Dinah went to heaben—
Dinah she wus lovin' me!
En if she had neber lef' me
I would neber weep at all,
En I would not miss de music
Ob de banjo on de wall.

[Pg 38]

When They Sing.

[Pg 39]

When dem darkies sing togedder
'Fo'e de houses in de street,
People passin' stop en lis'n
Ez dey say: "Now, ain't dat sweet?
All dem niggers got good voices,
En dey sho kin keep good time;
I would ruther heah dem singin'
Dan de bells ob Michael chime."

When dem darkies sing togedder
Wid de jew's harp en banjo;
Wid dem tamb'rine bells a-ringin'
En dem bottles dat dey blow,
Oh, it sho do seem lak music
Ob de holy angel ban',
En I feel lak shoutin': "Glory!
Take me ter de Canaan lan'."

When dem darkies sing togedder,
Dey kin make you laugh or cry;
Oh, dey kin, fo' joy or sorrow,
Bring de tear-drop ter yo' eye!
Dey kin make you stan' dar quiet,
Lis'nin' ter de singin' sweet,
Or kin hab you dancin', dancin',
Long ez you kin lif' yo' feet.

[Pg 40]

When dem darkies sing togedder,
White folks frow some shinin' dimes
Out de winder. My, en den
Don't dey hab some happy times?
Den de people what wus lis'nin'
Say dey mus' be gwine home;
Say dey sorry dat de singin'
Stop mos' soon ez dey had come.

At De Meetin'.

[Pg 41]

Oh, now, Missus, wus I 'sleep?
I is sorry, sho!
I des set down heah ter res'
Wid my head down, so.
En I meant to pray fo' grace
Des a little bit,
Kaze I got a sinnin' soul,
En I 'knowledge it.

Yes, I knows you pays me well
Fo' de work I do,
En I orter stick ter it
So dat I please you.
But I couldn't he'p it, Miss,
If I shet my eyes;

God done made dem wid dese hinges,
En He sho am wise.

Why'n't I sleep at night, you as'?
Missus, you don't know
How dem voices call en call,
Till I hab ter go.
En when once I git in church,
Dar I sho gwine stay
Till de stars am gittin' pale
'Fo'e de light ob day.

[Pg 42]

Dar's a meetin' gwine on
Wid de Baptis' now,
En do I ain't jine dat church,
I kin go, I 'low;
Dey don't shet de do' on me
'Cept when dey commune,
En it won't be time fo' dat,
So dey say, right soon.

My, dey hab a whoopin' time
Roun' dar eb'ry night,
En dat preacher sho kin put
Down de law des right;
En he preach de holy word
Till dem niggers shout,—
Till dey leab dey seats at las',
Dancin' all erbout.

[Pg 43]

Anthea Allen got religion
Roun' dar las' night, sho,
En she clap her han's en waltz
Up en down de flo',
Singin' "Glory! Hallelujah!
I is on de way!
Angels peepin' down frum heaven
Beckon me ter-day."

Den she fall down in a trance,
Right dar on de flo',
En dem darkies po' de camphor
Onto her, fo' sho;
But she don't wake up at all—
Lak de dead she lay,
En we lef' her lyin' dar
When we come away.

Dey sho take a big collection
At dat church las' night,
En dat money on de table
Sho wus shinin' bright.
En de preacher in de pulpit
Stan' up straight en say:
"Dem dat am not got a cent—
Dey kin go away!"

[Pg 44]

En he say: "Come up en bring
Money ter de Lawd!
Dat He love de chee'ful giver,
He say in His word;
What you gib ter Him ter-night
Am not frowed away,
Kaze de bread cas' on de sea
Gwine come back some day."

En dem niggers make a noise
Passin' up en down,
Some wid coppers, some wid nickels,
Some wid dimes, I'm boun';
En dey make de music ring,
While de preacher say:
"Oh, I lak ter see de money
Comin' up dat way!"

I sot up till mos' dis mornin'
At dat church las' night;
Dat how come my eyes don't feel
Wide awake en bright;
But I sorry dat I let em
Shet deysel's up tight
When I workin' heah fo' you—
Kaze *you* treat me right!

[Pg 45]

A Philosopher.

[Pg 46]

Mos' ob niggers sho believe
Dat de preacher know
All dat's fit ter study 'bout
In dis worl' below;
Think he am so smart dat he
Look beyon' de sky,
Whar he read what am gwine be
In de by en by.

I's a 'ception ter dat rule,
Ez you sho will fin',
En I come ter my conclusions
Out ob my own min':
Preachers ain't no mo' conspired
Dan is you en me;
Dat, if you des crack yo' eyes,
You am sho gwine see.



THE WOOD-SAWYER.

"Oh, I work hard, sho,
When de col' win' blow,
Sawin' en splittin' de white folks' wood!
But I do'n' complain
Ob de col' en de rain,
Kaze de Lawd gwine sen' what He
know am good."

Eb'ry man what see a tex'
In de trees en stones,

[Pg 47]

Ain't bin called ter preach en raise
Life in dead, dry bones.
Dat ole rooster scratchin' dar
Am a sarmont, sho,
But des kaze I read him right,
I ain't called, you know.

If you don't read it, you ain't
Got de seein' eyes,
En yo' heart cain't see dem things
What would make you wise.
Sho's de Bible done say dat
Dem what works kin eat,
Dat's a noble sarmont dar—
One dat cain't be beat.

When dat rooster scratch fo' worms
In de lowly groun',
He's a sayin' we mus' work
Fo' our bread, I'm boun';
En when he fin' food, en call
Till dat hen do run,
He sho mean dat man mus' work
Fo' de weakly one.

[Pg 48]

He don't shet his knowledge up
In a selfish min';
When he see de mornin' break
He tell all mankin'.
Do ter me all dis en mo',
Dat same rooster teach,
He don't say dat I's conspired
By de Lawd ter preach.

Des De Same.

[Pg 49]

My ole shanty am a fallin',
En de rain am leakin' frue,
En de rheumatiz done grip me
Till I don't know what ter do;
But I thank God fo' dis frame,
En I happy, des de same.

I cain't go en jine de singin',
Lak I did in ole-time days,
At de Calvary Baptis' Church,
Whar dey sing glad songs ob praise;
But my heart ain't sick en lame,
En it singin', des de same.

Mandy say de safe am empty—
We ain't got no food ter-day!
Say she do' know whar we git it,
'Thout an angel come dis way;
But I trus' in Jesus' name,
En my soul feas', des de same.

So De Sunshine Stay.

[Pg 50]

If de rooster crow, dey say,
'Fo'e de clock strike ten,
Atter he done gone ter roos'
In de chicken pen,
Den de weather sho gwine change
'Fo'e dat time nex' day,
En I don't care if it do—
So de sunshine stay.

How de rooster know if win'
Am gwine res' or blow,
Or if clouds gwine hol' de rain,
Or gwine let it po',
I cain't tell, do I live heah
Forty yeahs terday;
But I know my heart am glad
If de sunshine stay.

Daddy Long Legs.

[Pg 51]

"Ole Daddy Long Legs,
Why am you so tall?
You look lak yo' head
Gwine soon touch de wall;
En it take many stitches
Ter sew up dem breeches."

Ole Daddy Long Legs
Make answer ter me:
"De fines' fruit grow
In de top ob de tree,
En I's made tall ez dis
So's de bes' I won't miss."

His Capacity Filled.

[Pg 52]

Oh, I had a happy time—
Happy time las' night!
Staid inside dat meetin' house
Till it mos' daylight.
En I sho did sing en holler
Till de people know
Dat dis nigger got religion—
Couldn't hol' no mo'.

When I leave dat meetin' house—
Leave at ha'f pas' two,
I wuz gittin' hungry ez
Shoutin' niggers do;
En des den I heah a rooster
Gib a mighty crow;
"Don't he think he big?" I say,
"I gwine fetch him low!"

Oh, I fetch him low! En I
Tote him home wid me,
En wid dumplin's I done cook him
Quick ez dat kin be.
Wid religion en dat chicken
I am full up, sho,
But I reckon when night come
I kin hol' some mo'!

[Pg 53]

Ike's Temptation.

[Pg 54]

Ebry day dat come, I pass
Whar de watermilyun grow
In de Massa's milyun patch,
En dey is a sight, fo' sho.
Dey des peeps frum out de leaves,
Playin' hide en seek wid me;

En dey beg me come en ta'se 'em,
Des ter see how good dey be;
But I sho does pass 'em by—
Same's I don't know whar dey lie.

I's a member ob de church,
En you'll neber see me steal;
I kin sho han' out de cash
Fo' my bacon en corn-meal.
Dey will keep me des ez fat
Ez I eber want ter be,
En de luxuries ob life—
Heah dem milyuns callin' me!
Don't dey know dat I done say
I ain't gwine take dem away?

[Pg 55]

One ob dem—he sho am big—
Prettiest thing I eber seen—
All arrayed, mo' bright dan lilies,
In dem shades ob shinnin' green.
He done creep frum out dem leaves
Till he close ter dis low fence,
En he beckon me ter take him—
Think dat I ain't got good sense!
But dat coat ob him do shine,
En I wish dat he wus mine.

Wonder if he look ez nice
On de inside ez de out?
Wonder if he's lak dem Christians
What do nothin' else but shout?
Guess dat I could mighty soon
Bu's' him on a rock, en see,
If I had him on dis side
Ob de ole rail-fence wid me.
Dat I'll do! If he's deceivin',
Nothin' else ain't wuth believin'!

[Pg 56]

He am mellow ter de co';
Sho de heart ob him am right;
Since I gone en bu's' him open,
I mus' git him out ob sight.
I would sin agin my conshuns
If I let him go ter was'e
When so many mouths is thirstin'
Fo' de juice dey loves ter tas'e;—
Juice dat cheers de nigger's soul
Mo' dan all dat's bought wid gol'.

It wus good, dat watermilyun,
But I sho am gittin' sick;
Go en git de doctor, honey—
Go en git him mighty quick!
'Twus a dirty trick, fo' cartin,
What de Massa gone en done,
Puttin' strychnine in dat milyun
So's ter ketch de guilty one;—
But I ain't a rogue, he know—
I's a Christian, dat am sho!

Whar De Watermilyun Grow.

[Pg 57]

I wus fetch up fur away
Frum dis city whar I stay,
In de lan' ob shinin' day
Whar de watermilyun grow.

Oh, my boss heah treat me gran'!
But I sad, you understan',
Longing fo' de Dixie lan'
Whar de watermilyun grow.

Fiel's ob cotton beckon me,
En de sweet magnolia tree,
En my heart des cry ter be
 Whar de watermilyun grow.

Oh, de South am des de place
Fo' de thirsty cullud race!
En I long ter turn my face
 Whar de watermilyun grow.

If dey try to 'tice you 'way,
Don't you lis'n what dey say,
Kaze de nigger bo'n ter stay
 Whar de watermilyun grow.

[Pg 58]

What His Education Done.

[Pg 59]

What dat you say? Sen' Zeke ter school
Des kaze he ain't bin bo'n a fool?
Now you talkin'! You ain't heerd
'Bout George Washington T. Beard?
He wus smart, his ma tell me,
En he l'arn his A, B, C,
'Thout no' difficult at all—
Nat'ral ez de ripe fruit fall.

En dat smartness grow on him
Fas' ez leaves grow on de lim',
Till at las' de people say:
"He mus' sholy go away
Ter de college in de town!"
'Twus a great one, I am boun',
Whar dey teach dat young man mo'
Dan de mos' ob niggers know.

When he reach ter gradiation,
My! Dey make a great 'miration;
En dey say: "Spite ob his race,
En dat shinin', coal-black face,
He gwine make de people's eyes
Open wide wid dey surprise;
Dat wus sho a good essay,
What he read fo' us ter-day."

[Pg 60]

En dey say dem people chee'ed
Dat George Washington T. Beard;
Say he look en ac' ez gran'
Ez de fines' in de lan;
Bowin' dis en den dat way
Wid a smile dat seem ter say:
"I is ready now ter do
Somethin' dat will 'stonish you."

Den what nex'? He des come home—
Wait dar fo' de chance ter come
Ter git some big job, fo' true,
Lak falutin' white folks do;—
Think he am too smart, you know,
Ter use axe or spade or hoe;
Or ter do work, han' ter han',
Wid de ignorant cullud man.

[Pg 61]

Dar he set en dar he wait,
Railin' 'gin de nigger's fate,
Sayin' dat de worl' am hard,
When we all know dat de Lawd
Make it easier, fo' sho',
When de man use what he know;
When he don't des set en wait,
Railin' allers 'gin his fate.

Ez you say, dat Zeke ob mine
Got a min' dat sho could shine,
En dem han's ob his kin do
Mos' ez much ez mine, fo' true.
He won't neber lack fo' bread
Wid dem han's en wid dat head;
En I don't sen' him ter school
Whar he l'arn ter be a fool.

Booker T. Washington.

[Pg 62]

People tell de news las' week
Dat a cullud man gwine speak
 At de college hall;
Say he try ter lif' his race
Ter a high en shinin' place
 On dis 'restial ball.

En dey say dat cullud man
Doin' work dat sho am gran'
 In dis worl' below;
Say he gib his life, fo' true,
So de nigger be en do
 Better dan befo'.

He done 'stablish a fine school,
Whar, dey say, he 'force dis rule:
 Train de man all roun';
Let de han's dey duty know;
Let de min' wake up en grow;
 Let de heart be soun'.

[Pg 63]

Dat great school am situate
Down in Alabamy state,
 In dis Dixie lan';
En folks north en eas' en wes',
When dey heah it do its bes',
 Len' a he'pin' han'.

Mr. Washington come down
Las' week ter dis very town,
 Ez I spec' you know;
En when I went ter dat hall
Des ter heah him speak, en all,
 I wus 'sprised, fo' sho;

'Sprised ter see dat cullud man
On de platform, dress up gran',
 Wid de bes' white men;
En if he don't speak dat day
Words ez good ez dey kin say—
 Den my name ain't Ben!

Oh, I wish dat I could tell
What he say! It make me swell
 All up fat wid pride;
En I say: "I sho gwine shake
His right han' fo' dem words' sake,
 When we git outside."

[Pg 64]

When he finish en set down,
I go outside en walk roun'
 Till his face I see;
Den I say, sho ez I bo'n:
"Howdy, Mr. Washington!
 Won't you speak ter me?"

En he shake my han' de way
Dat men do when dey hearts say:
 "Glad ter see yo' face!"

En I tell him; "'Fo'e you go
I mus' say, you make me, sho,
Proud ob de black race."

Crazy Joe's Ambition.

[Pg 65]

Crazy Joe, he make me laugh
When he talk dat way
'Bout de mansion on de hill
Whar de gov'nor stay;
When he vow dat he
Sho ez life gwine be
Walkin' on dem flo's some day.

He ain't wise on politics,
En we tell him so,
En we say: "Nobody vote
Fo' you, Crazy Joe!"
But he say dat he
Sometime sho gwine be
Walkin' on dat mansion flo'.

His vote he'p de white man git
Ter dat place, he say,
En he waitin' fo' de state
Ter do right, en pay
Him wid dis job soon:
Washin' de spittoon
What dey use dar ebry day!

[Pg 66]

Grinnin' Jake.

[Pg 67]

Neber seen a feller grin
Lak dat nigger do;
When you as' him anything
He des look at you;—
Neber answer what you say—
Grin en grin dat stupid way.

When somebody what don't know
As' him what he name,
He hang down dat head ob his
Ez do' he ashame;
En he show dem teeth ob white
Lak dey speak fo' him all right.

"Is de cat done got yo' tongue?"
Mammy as' him once,
"Or is you des bo'n to be
A dum', stupid dunce?"
But he hang dat head en grin,
Silly ez he allers bin.

[Pg 68]

I mos' b'lieve dat when he git
Up ter heaven's gate,
If de angels as' him why
He stan' dar en wait,
He won't say: "Please let me in,"
But des grin en grin en grin!



Grinnin' Jake.

Elmiry Vaccinated.

[Pg 69]

When de vaccinator come,
My Elmiry run frum home
 Fas' ez she could go;
Run away ter Missus' house,
Whar she slip in lak a mouse,
 So de Miss won't know.

En she scramble hin' de head
Ob de Missus' high pos' bed,
 Des ter hide erwhile;
En de Missus come en go
Frue dat room, but she don't know
 'Bout dat silly chile.

By en by, when she come frue,
She heah somethin' breave, she do,
 Lak somebody 'sleep;
En her heart stan' still dat day,
En she am too sca'ed, she say,
 Des to take a peep.

So she run out-do's en call;
"Sen' de pleeceman (heah me all!)
 Right now ter my house;
Dar's a robber 'hin' my bed,
Waitin' till de day be dead,
 Quiet ez a mouse."

En de news dem people spread
'Bout de robber 'hin' de bed,
 Waitin' till day done;
En de pleeceman sho did race,
So he reach dat hidin' place,
 'Fo'e de robber run.

But when he git dar en see
Dat chile sleepin' quiet, he
 Des frow back his head,
En he laugh en laugh en say:
"Come in, Missus, right away!
 Who dis 'hin' yo' bed?"

Dey take hol' ob her en shake
Dat Elmiry till she wake
 'Nough ter rub her eyes;

[Pg 70]

When she open dem en see
Who dat man am—goodness me!—
She am sho surprise’.

[Pg 71]

“Please, Mister Pleeceman,” den she say,
“I’ll be vaccernate’ dis day
If you let me go!”
But he say dat des a tale,
En he take her ter de jail
’Fo’e her mammy know.

Take her ter be vaccernate,
En she grunt now, soon en late,
Wid dat arm dat’s so’.
’Tain’t no use ter run frum home
When de vaccernater come;—
He gwine git you, sho.

“Simple Simon.”

[Pg 72]

Des cartin ez dey is a way
Ter miss doin what am right,
Dat boy gwine allers fin’ it out
What work fo’ Mistah White.

Las’ yeah dey had him drive ’em all
Out ter de ole school groun’,
Whar all de white folks congregate
Frum miles en miles er-roun’.

En Mistah White, when dey git dar,
Say: “Simon, now you min’,
En put dis ice we got heah, in
De cooles’ place you fin’.”

En when dey all go in ter heah
De chillun speak en sing,
Dat boy—he go en drap dat ice
Right in de bubblin’ spring!

An Obstacle Overcome.

[Pg 73]

Dat Tom, he allers want ter know
All ’bout de things he see;
I neber could remember ha’f
Ob what he done as’ me.

He see dem posts down by de road,
Wid wires stretch ercrost,
En ast me why dem wires wus
Hung dar from post ter post.

I tell him den, de bes’ I kin,
Dat dey wus made to sen’
De news ercrost, so men kin heah
Frum dey fur absent frien’.

He stan’ en gaze en gaze on dem
In his onquirin’ way;
Den: “How de news git roun dem posts?”
Dat stupid nigger say.

[Pg 74]

He sho ain’t got de sense ter know
(De good fo’ nothin’ scamp!)
Dat des ter meet dat obstickle
We got de postage stamp.



"How de News git roun' dem posts?"

Two of a kind.

[Pg 75]

Sime say he don't know what ter do wid dat mule
Dat he done gone en bought (he wus sholy a fool!)
At de sale in de town;
He say it so stubborn dat when he say "gee,"
It allers gwine "haw," ez sho ez kin be,
En I's glad, I am boun'.

He say when he want it ter stan' it gwine walk;—
When he want it ter go, it am sholy gwine balk,
Lak a dunce all de time.
He say dey ain't neber bin bo'n sich a fool,
But I know, I sho do, dat pesky ole mule
Ain't ez stubborn ez Sime.

[Pg 76]

He neber gwine do what I tell him am right,
Do he know I wus bo'n wid a caul on my sight,
En kin see what am bes';
I tol' him ter stay frum dat sale in de town,
But somethin' des draw him ez blood do de houn',
Till he foller de res'.

I sho knew dat day what dat man wus erbout
When I seen him a-takin' de las' money out
Ob de cup on de she'f;
En I glad he done spent ebry cent on dat mule,
En's got ter work now wid dat pesky ole fool,
Kaze he's stubborn hisse'f.

Quarantined.

[Pg 77]

Who am sca'ed ob small-pox? Pshaw!
Not dis nigger, sho.
Las' yeah dar wus lots ob it
Down in Spilman's row;

En de pleeceman walk erbout,
Keepin' some in en some out.

En I ask: "What dey gwine do
Fo' 'nough food to eat?"
En Sime answer: "Ez fo' dat,
Small-pox cain't be beat;
Kaze when it done shet yo' gate,
Den de town gwine fill yo' plate."

He say dem dat's quarantined
Down in Spilman's row,
Gittin' better things ter eat
Dan we am, fo' sho;
Say he see 'em take some food
Back dar dat wus mighty good.

[Pg 78]

Den I min' me ob my frien's,
How dey lonesome be,
En I say: "I cain't fo'get 'em—
Dey am deah ter me!"
En dey voices call en call,
Till I heah dem ober all.

'T last I say dat I mus' go
If I am dey frien';—
While de guard walk up *dat* way,
I slip in *dis* en';—
En in Spilman's row I stay
Till de small-pox pass erway.

I don't ketch it—no, suhree!
Neber git de chance;
Zeke wus down dar wid his fiddle,
En I jine de dance;—
En de city furnish food
Dat, fo' sho, tas'e mighty good.

A Puzzling Clause.

[Pg 79]

Oh, de preacher done fine
When I marry Em'line,
But what did he mean, I wonder,
When he stan dar en' say:
"I done jine you ter-day;
Let nobody put you ter thunder!"

Fo'e de Wah.

[Pg 80]

I ain't neber work, not me!
Fo' de white trash. Kaze, you see,
I wus fetch up mighty gran'
By de bes' folks in de lan';—
En dey teach me how ter do
Work fo' ladies rich ez you,
'Fo'e de wah.

"Who fetch me up?" Now, Missus, sho
I done tol' you dat befo'!
Why a Miss wid heart ez true
Ez wus eber knowed by you;
En a face dat shine ez bright
Ez dem days so full ob light,
'Fo'e de wah.

When I sick in dem ole days,
Missus don't des go her ways,

Leabin' me ter cry en groan
In dat cabin all alone;
Wid her han's she wait on me
Till I well ez I kin be,
 'Fo'e de wah.

[Pg 81]

When de fus' sweet baby come,
Blessin' my deah Missus' home,
'Twarn't nobody else but me
Dressed it nice ez it could be
In a dress ob spotless white,
(Shinin' lak de robes ob light!)
 'Fo'e de wah.

En when angels, by en by,
Call dat darlin' ter de sky,
'Twus me robe it in its bes',
Ez I say: "Now, sleep en res'."
Den de house wus sad erwhile
Kaze we lose our only chile,—
 'Fo'e de wah.

God won't hab dem arms ob Miss
Empty ob de mammy's bliss,
En he fill em up wid joy—
Now a gal, en den a boy;
En deysel's dem chillun twine
Roun' dis happy heart ob mine,
 'Fo'e de wah.

[Pg 82]

When dat jolly nigger, Ned,
Take de notion in his head
Dat he want ter marry me,
Missus say: "Well, we will see;"
En she buy him fo' her slave
(He bin long time in his grave!)
 'Fo'e de wah.

Buy him fo' her slave, you see,
So dat he kin live wid me
In de hut whar de sweet vine
Ob de yellow jes'mine twine;
Whar de mockin'-bird all day
Sing kaze we wus glad en gay,
 'Fo'e de wah.

Den dem Yankees come, you know,
En dey beat de South, fo' sho;
Missus tell us: "You is free!
You don't b'long no mo' ter me."
But us niggers up en say:
"We gwine stay right whar we stay
 'Fo'e de wah!"

[Pg 83]

En we stay. We didn't go
Ter de North lak some I know.
Dey sho thought dat dey gwine be
Rich up dar ez dey wus free;
But dey soon come back agin
Ter de lan' whar dey had bin
 'Fo'e de wah.

Missus die.—Please 'scuse dese teahs;
I mus' cry, spite ob de yeahs,
When I min' me ob dat day
Dat dey laid her deep away
By de willow bendin' low,—
One she planted long ago
 'Fo'e de wah.

Den dey scatter, all de res',
Some ter eas', en some to wes';
One done jine de Miss on high
In de mansions ob de sky;
Dem dat's libin' write ter me

Ob de times dat used ter be
 'Fo'e de wah.

[Pg 84]

En dey sen's some change erlong,
Calling it "but des a song;"
But it free dis nigger, sho,
Frum a lot ob care en woe;
En it make me dream dat I
Libin in dem days gone by
 'Fo'e de wah.

I is gittin weak en ole,
En I know dat soon my soul
Sho gwine heah de angels come,
Singin', singin', "Home, sweet home!"
En up dar my eyes gwine see
All de white folks deah to me
 'Fo'e de wah.

Ground Hog Day.

[Pg 85]

What de use ter go agin
 What de groun' hog say,
Little bud, dat done unfol'
 'Fo'e Spring come dis way?
'Tis a shame fo' dat sunshine
 Ter be foolin' you,
When mo' fros' am prophesied
 By de prophet true:

If de sun am shinin' bright,
 He turn right away
Back into dat cozy bed,
 Whar till spring he stay.
But if clouds am in de sky,
 Den he know, fo' sho,
Dat de winter am done pass
 Ter return no mo'.

Yestiday, when he creep out
 Frum his winter den,
He des turn his se'f erbout,
 En went in agin.
He ain't easy ter deceive
 By warm sun en breeze,
Kaze he got a way ter know
 If dey'll be a freeze.

[Pg 86]

Wish de sunshine wouldn't 'vite
 Flowers ter unfol',
When de prophet prophesy
 Dar gwine be mo' col';
Wish de little buds could know
 What de groun' hog say,
En would stay shet, close en tight,
 Till Spring come ter stay.

Excusable.

[Pg 87]

Why you go en fight dat boy?
 Don't you know he white?
Bet de pleeceman come en git you
 'Fo'e you sleep dis night!
 Don't you heah yo' mammy say,
 Why you knock him down dat way?

"Called you nigger?" Did he, sho?

Den you done des right!
Eb'ry time de po' white buckra
Call you dat, you fight!
If you am one, I am sho
'Taint dey place ter tell you so!

Jeff's Funeral Sermon.

[Pg 88]

Git my mou'nin' dress, Susanah,
Out de bottom draw';—
It bin waitin' long time wid
Dis black hat ob straw,
Fo' de preacher ter come by
En preach Jeff up ter de sky.

Jeff done pass away befo' us
Des six months ter-day;
But it don't seem long ez dat
(How time pass away!)
Since dey laid dat po' boy down
In de churchyard's holy groun'.

Yestiday when I ast Missus
Let me go ter-day
Ter Jeff's fun'ral, she so s'prised
Till she up en say:
"Sakes! dey bury him, you know,
Las' yeah, long en long ago!"

[Pg 89]

En I tell her dat de people
Libin fur frum home,
Couldn't heah dat he wus gone,
En dey want ter come;
So we wait till news wus spread
Ebrywhar dat he wus dead.

En we 'vite so many people
Frum de country roun',
Dat dar'll be a sight ob niggers
At dat church, I'm boun';
So we better be gwine on,
Kaze we set wid dem dat mou'n.

Uncle Bob to his Dog.

[Pg 90]

Uncle Bob say ter his dog, Leo:
"You tangle yo'se'f in my heart-strings, sho,
But de day gwine come when you got ter go,
Kaze I ain't got a dollar
Ter buy you a collar,
En de dog-ketcher ketch you, sho."

Uncle Bob say: "I dervide my bread,
En I kiver you up in my nice, straw bed,
But I sca'ed dat my dog gwine soon be dead,
Kaze I ain't got a dollar
Ter buy you a collar,
En de dog-ketcher ketch you, sho."

Uncle Bob say: "Oh, de stolen am sweet,
En dat why you clim' frue de fence ter de street,
Do I already tol' you de en' you gwine meet!
Kaze I ain't got a dollar
Ter buy you a collar,
En de dog-ketcher ketch you, sho."

[Pg 91]

A Prophecy.

Sho ez dat dar sun on high
 Shine on me ter-day,
 Dar gwine be a riber-rise,
 Lis'n what I say!
 'Fo'e de summer am done pas'
 Dat dar Congaree
 Am gwine over-flow dem banks,
 Rushin' ter de sea.

I does closely watch de signs,
 En de wasp, fo' true,
 Biuldin' higher up dis yeah
 Dan she mos'ly do.
 By dat nes', so safe en high,
 She done say ter me;
 "Dar gwine be a rise dis yeah
 Ob de Congaree."

Possam en Pertaters.

De pe'simmons in de pastur' am a-fallin', fallin' down,
 En de sweet pertaters waitin' ter be dug frum out de groun';
 Dat dey good de possum know,
 En he fatten on 'em, sho!
 En I tas'e his juice ter-morrer, else I neber tas'e it mo'.

Bring de light-wood torch, Horiah, en don't creep so slow erlong;
 Lif' yo' lazy feet up faster, so dey keep time ter dis song:
 "Mr. Possum, hear me say,
 'Tain't no use ter run away,
 Kaze I sho gwine ketch en bleed you 'fo'e de breakin' ob de day!

Dem two dogs already trace him ter de big pe'simmon tree,
 En I see dem eyes ob his'n shinin' down lak stars at me.
 He for sho am perch up high,
 But I git him, by en by,
 En dat feas' I hab to-morrer beat de fines' chicken pie.

I done grab him by de neck, en I comin' down agin,
 En de weight ob him do tell me he am fur frum bein' thin;
 En he droop hisse'f en play
 Dat he dead en pass away,
 Do he know dat if I loose him he gwine mighty soon be gay.

He am sho a fine one, en I proud ter take him home,
 En de mammy en de chillun wake ter see him when he come;
 En I singe his tender hide
 Till it look lak it done fried,
 Den I try ter go ter sleep, but my eyes stay open wide.

Oh, my eyes stay open wide, till de breakin' ob de day,
 When de long, long night oh waitin' am at las' done pass away;
 En I go outside en scratch
 Sweet pertaters frum de patch,
 Kaze wid juices ob de possum dey ain't nothin' else ter match.

When we bake dat critter brown, wid pertaters stuff inside,
 Den we say: "Oh, hasten, nigger, ez de bridegroom ter de bride!"
 Come en dine wid us ter-day,
 En we know dat you gwine stay
 Till de las ob dat good possum am done hid frum sight away.

Cotton's Comin' In.

Bet de goldenrod's a-bloomin'
 'Long de country roads;
Bet de hick'ry nuts am fallin'
 By de loads en loads.
Bet pe'simmons am mos' ripe—
 Makes a feller grin!
What's de sign? Why, man alive,
 Cotton's comin' in!

Bet ole Pete am busy now
 Bilin' sorghum down;
Bet dey'll hab a pullin' soon—
 'Vite me frum de town;
Bet de apple's dryin' on
 Chiny plates en tin,
Bet all dis, en mo', des kaze
 Cotton's comin' in.

Bet de rice am hangin' now
 Head down in de sun;
Bet ole Massa's habin' times
 Wid his rod en gun;
Wish I'd staid dar in de woods—
 Town's chuck full ob sin,
En I sho git homesick when
 Cotton's comin' in.

Bet de pinders spread out on
 De ole shed ter dry;
Bet de possum know de way
 Ter de tree-top high.
Soon dem darkies put away
 'Taters in de bin;—
Lan'! I's gwine back when Pete
 Brings his cotton in!

[Pg 97]

Dat Yaller Gal.

I bin watchin' you, big Jim,
 En I s'prised, fo' sho;
You is done fo'git mos' all
 Dat you eber know.
Dar you wus, at de cake-walk,
 Makin' eyes at Sue,
When you orter know dat gal
 Ain't gwine look at you.

Yo' hair curl on top yo' head
 Lak sheep's wool, fo' sho,
En yo' skin am des ez black
 Ez de blackes' crow.
Ebry time you pass dat gal
 She stick up her nose,
En draw back, des lak she sca'ed
 You gwine touch her clo'es.

Think she am too good ter speak
 Ter a coal-black man
What, ez ebrybody know,
 Do de bes' he kin,
Kaze her skin ain't black lak yourn,
 En her hair ain't wool,
She ac' lak she am de queen—
 Sick'nin' yaller fool!

Ebry day she com' dat hair
 Lak de white folks do;
Pin it back wid fine hair-pins,

[Pg 98]

[Pg 99]

Shinin lak bran' new;
En she go erlong de street
Holding her head high,
Lak she neber see her race
When dey pass her by.

Us dat am de niggers right—
Us don't ac' lak dat!
When we com' our hair we make
Heah en dar a plait;
En we wrap 'em good wid cord
So dey sho gwine stay
Right in place a week or mo'
Frum de com'in' day.

[Pg 100]

En we don't pass cullud folks
Wid our head up high,
But we stop en speak wid dem
'Fo'e we pass on by.
En we as' 'em: "How you do?
How's de folks at home?"
En we tell 'em whar we live,
Sayin' "You mus' come."

I's bin watchin' you, big Jim,
En I's s'prised, fo' sho;
Ez I sed, you is fo'got
All you eber know.
If you's got good sense you'll quit
Makin' eyes at Sue,
Kaze dat stuck-up yaller gal
Ain't gwine look at you.

To Walk Wid His Gal.

[Pg 101]

Dem gals stan' erbout, en giggle en grin;
Dey say: "His shoes shine' lak a bran' new pin!"
En de way dat dey treat him am sholy a sin,
When John go ter walk wid his gal.

Dey laugh at his hat en dey laugh at his tie,
En dey say: "Will you 'low us ter see you go by?"
En sho wid sich nonsinse dat nigger dey try,
When John go ter walk wid his gal.

"Oh, shet up!" I tell 'em, "en dat right away,—
I know what's de matter, now heah what I say;
You's ebry one jealous, you sho is, ter-day,
Kaze John gone ter walk wid his gal!"

[Pg 102]

"Cunjud."

[Pg 103]

Frow fish salt out on de grass
Ebrywhar dat man done pass,
En be quick;
Scatter it all roun' de do',
Else somebody heah, fo' sho,
Gwine be sick.

He done cunjur' me, you know,
One time long en long ago,
'Fo'e you bo'n;
En it ain't fo' good ter-day
Dat he stop by heah dat way,
Den pass on.

Dat de way he done befo',

En wid fever laid me low
In de bed.
Go en spread de salt all roun'
'Fo'e we bofe am lyin' down,
Sick or dead.

Uncle Ben's Superstition.

[Pg 104]

Oh, please, Missus, don't as' dat!
Is you neber heah it sed
Him dat plants a holly tree
Sho gwine lie down, stiff en dead,
Soon's dat tree grow big en high
'Nough ter shade him whar he lie?

I ain't sca'ed ob death, not me!
I's bin baptized in de creek,
En in big experience meetin's
I does rise sometimes ter speak;
But I don't tempt Providence;—
'Tis a act ob wickedness.

"How ter git it planted, den?"
Ain't got time, yo'se'f, you say?
Lis'n, mum, en I will tell you
What's, fo' true, de only way,
'Th'out you hab somebody die
Soon's dat tree grow big en high:

[Pg 105]

Put a seed somewhar out do's,
So de win' will blow it down
Des whar you would hab it planted,
On a nice, sof' bit ob groun'.
Dar it will take root en grow;
I is tried it, en I know.

But ter put de seed in groun',
Or ter plant dar de young tree,
Am sho temptin' Providence—
En it ain't bin done by me;
Dat am how I'm heah ter-day
Ter teach ole Missus de right way.

Wid de Witches.

[Pg 106]

When I hab ter go ter bed,
I sho civer up my head,
Kaze I allers mighty sca'ed
Dat de witches come at night.

Dey does come sometimes, you know,
En wid dem you got ter go,
Ridin' fas' or ridin' slow,
When dey come fo' you at night.

I does try my bes' ter shriek,
But my voice git low en weak,
En I shake so I cain't speak
When de witches come at night.

Oh, dey tote you up so high
Till you neahly touch de sky,
En you sca'ed mos' 'nough ter die
When you ride wid dem at night.

[Pg 107]

"You des dream dat," Missus say,
But she don't fool me ter-day!

I done bin too fur away
Wid dem witches des las' night.

A Restless Spirit.

[Pg 108]

"Don't b'I' eve in hants?" Well, dat des show
Dat you cartin neber know
'Bout dat big house on de hill,
Whar a sperit walk at night
When de dark done quench de light,
En de worl' am calm en still.

"Who lib dar?" Well, gracious me!
You won't as' dat when you see
Dat ghos' walkin' roun' de place;
Ghos' dat allers kneels en prays
Under dem magnolia trees,
Wid a sad en longin' face.

Once, dey say, a sweet bride come
Frum her fur-off northern home,
Ter dis lan' ob flow'rs en song;
En she love de birds en bees
Hummin' 'roun' dem fragrant trees,
En wus happy all day long.

[Pg 109]

Dar she go mos' ebry day
When de noon-sun shine dat way,
Waitin' fo' her man ter come;
En when evenin' light grow dim
Dar she go ter watch fo' him
Ter come back ter dat glad home.

En dey walk dar, des dem two,
When de stars am peepin' frue
Leaves ob dem magnolia trees;
En dey bofe am glad ob heart
Des kaze dey don't walk apart,
En am kiss by dat same breeze.

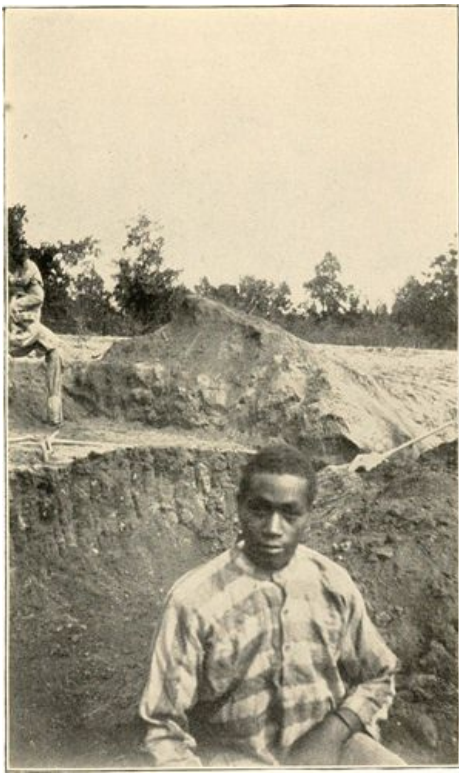
When one day dat man come home,
He don't see his young wife come
Out ter meet him on de lawn;
She took sick, de people say,
En her spirit pass away
'Fo'e de little baby bo'n.

Den her mammy write en say:
"Fetch en bury her, we pray,
By her sisters heah at home."
So she lie dar in de col',
Whar de win's am strong en bol',
Waitin' fo' de kingdom come.

[Pg 110]

But her sperit walk at night,
When de dark done quench de light,
Under dem magnolia trees;
En she stop dar en kneel down
Wid her white dress floatin' roun'
In de gentle, sighin' breeze.

Oh, my heart ache in my breas'
Fo' dat sperit cravin' res'!
En I know it would fin' ease
If dey bring dem bones some day
Ter de south, en let 'em lay
Under dem magnolia trees.



“On de Chain Gang.”

Pardoned.

[Pg 111]

Ike wus workin' on de chain gang
Ebry day till set ob sun,
Kaze he bin took up fo' somethin'
Dat he neber orter done.

En he ketch de quick consumption
Workin' in de col' en rain,
En he say if dey des free him
He won't do so bad agin.

Den his white frien's write a letter
Dat dey as' us all ter sign,
Sayin': "Ike am weak en sickly,
En he mus' be treated kin'."

Sayin': "He cain't lib much longer,
En we hope you let him come
Back ter dem dat am his people,
So he pass away at home."

En we des keep waitin', waitin',
Till a letter come at las',
Sayin' dat de gov'nor glad
He kin grant us what we as'.

When we carry Ike dat message,
Ho don't heah us what we say,
Kaze de Lawd done come en call him,
En his soul done pass away.

[Pg 112]



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