Elsie Van Cron Gamage.

EIGHT NEGRO SONGS

[FROM BEDFORD CO. VIRGINIA]

COLLECTED BY
FRANCIS H. ABBOT

EDITED BY
ALFRED J. SWAN

1. WHO GOÑ BRING YOU CHICKENS
2. MUH REGLUH DRAM
3. OLE ARK MOVIN'
4. SQUIRL, HE TOTE A BUSHY TAIL
5. BOOKUH RED
6. DE BAD MAN'S BALL
7. DAT LONESOME ROAD
8. VANDERBILT'S DAUGHTER

Price $1.50 Net

NEW YORK
ENOCH & SONS
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STEINWAY HALL, 113 W. 57TH ST.
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Sections along: Reminiscences I feel like a nameless child
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Editor's Note

The few Negro Songs that compose the present little volume have been one of the great delights of my sojourn in Virginia. In the picturesque and forcible execution by their collector, my friend Mr. Francis H. Abbot, they never failed in their most direct aim: to portray to the listener the rich imagery, the racy humour, the naive pathos, and the simple, yet original philosophy of the modern negro's mind. From a purely musical point of view they constitute a value that cannot be disregarded. Melodically, some of them are on a par with the best there is in folk-song literature. Rhythmically, they possess all the traits of genuine collective creation; (absolute spontaneity of rhythm, irregular time, etc.), and their constant use of syncopation rescues even the more obvious melodies, with great dash, from triviality.

I have put down with such accuracy as musical notation would allow both melody and accompaniment, from the performance of Mr. Francis H. Abbot. Not a note of his has undergone any change, my own suggestions being confined to purely outward matters, such as choice of key, etc. The piano accompaniment in the majority of cases is in imitation of the guitar to which the songs were sung originally. The only exception is the song "Squirl he tote a bushy tail," which is obviously one of the melodies that stand out unaccompanied in all their glory. I could not resist the temptation, however, to underscore a descending Dorian scale into which the song fitted admirably, for the benefit of the singer who will prefer the most frugal accompaniment to no accompaniment at all.

I may add, in conclusion, that a great deal of the vitality of these songs rests in the Negro dialect, which should be studied by the singer with great care, from Mr. F. H. Abbot's glossary.

New York,
July 1923.

Alfred J. Swan.

Glossary and General Remarks

.....

These songs will fall perfectly flat if turned into good English. I am therefore grouping here the commoner phenomena of the accent of the negroes in Bedford County (the unschooled ones, of course), in the hope that those singers who honour me by using these songs may acquire a fairly good pronunciation.

I. Slight final and medial consonants: e.g. nigguhs, bes' (= best), wid (with), de (the), flo' (floor), fum (from), fuh (for), dahkies (darkies), puffec' (perfect).

II. The negroes have a system of nasals like the French; not the same sounds, but pronounced in the same way with nose and mouth passages both open. I have represented this by the phonetic symbol ~, but I was afraid to leave off the n, as I should have done, for fear the word would not be understood. Do not pronounce the n however; simply pronounce as a Frenchman would if these particular nasals existed in his language: thus don't becomes doñ, aint becomes añ, gwine (= going) becomes gwiñ, going to becomes goñ.

III. The sound of u in "dull", which any vowel in our language is capable of taking on, I have represented, where it would not naturally be so pronounced, by uh. So our well-known word another becomes uhnuthuh (portentous looking thing!), never becomes nuvvuh, to becomes tuh, and so on.

Bellevue,
Bedford Co.,
Virginia.
July 1923.

Francis H. Abbot.

1. Who goñ bring you Chickens?

.....

This pathetic song is sung to his sweetheart by a youth who is going to jail for six months. He does not mind this so much as he does working on the "county farm," to which convicts are sometimes sent instead of being kept in close confinement.

- Who goñ - who is going to
- aw - oh
- mont's - months
- aiñ - aint - isn't
- hit's - it's
- wukkin' - working
- gawn - gone

1. Who Goñ Bring You Chickens

Largo appassionato

p

1. Who goñ bring you chick-ens when I'm

gawn? Aw!___ ba-beh! Who goñ bring you chick-ens when I'm gawn?

p

2. Six mont's in jail aiñ so long, Aw!___ dah-lin', Hit's

wuk-kin on dat coun-ty farm

f

3. Who goñ be yo true love___

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now? Aw! hon - ey! Who goñ be yo true love

now? 4. Six mont's in jail aiñ so long, Aw! dah - lin', Hit's

wuk-kin' on dat coun - ty farm. 5. I got my pick and shovel

now, Aw! ba - beh! Yo true love done gawn!

8

1
2
3
4

2. Muh Regluh Dram

.....

A waggish song, of pertinent philosophy, however, since the prohibition of alcohol in the United States.

- dram: means a drink of whisky
- ruthuh - rather
- 'n tuh hev my right min' - than to have my right mind.
- whin - when
- nuvvuh - never
- babe: means sweet-heart, honey, or darling. She answers: "You talk all right."
- fuh - for

2. Muh Regluh Dram

Moderato. Piacevole

1. Talk a - bout yo whis - ky, Talk a - bout yo wine, I'd

p

ru-thuh hev muh reg-luh dram'n tuh hev muh right min'. How does I talk, Babe?

3

n:f subito

parlando

"Talk all - right"

2. Talk a - bout yo whis - ky,

pp

p

Talk a-bout yo beuh, I'd ru-thuh hev muh reg-luh dram'n tuh be uh mil-lio-

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parlando

neuh. How does I talk, Babe? "Talk all right"

mf subito *pp*

3. Talk a - bout yo whis - ky, Talk a - bout yo gin,

p

Doc - tuh said 'twould kill me, but 'e nuv - vuh said whin, How does I talk, Babe?

3

mf subito

parlando

"Talk all - right" 4. Prea - chuh in de pul - pit, got

pp *p*

Bi - ble in his han' preach-in' fuh uh dol - lah fuh tuh git 'im uh-nuth-uh

dram. How does I talk, Babe? "Talk all - right" 5. Preachuh in de pul - pit, got

dol - lah in his han'. Says yuh cain go to Heb'm tel yuh giv' im uh - nuth-uh

dram. How does I talk, Babe? "Talk all - right."

3. Ole Ark movin'

.....

This spiritual exists in several forms among the Southern negroes. I give here the one our cook used to sing when I was a boy.

〰"Monuh, whyn't yuh come along" is supposed to be interjected by the preacher. The front pew is reserved for the "mourners", a word used to designate those who get excited by religious emo - tion and under stress of it rise from their seats and come forward to groan and shout in presence of the congregation.

3. Ole Ark Movin'

or

Noah's Ark

Key F major

Allegro

mf

Ole ark a-mov - in', mov - in', mov - in', De

mf

ole ark a-mov - in' by de Spert o' Gawd, Well de ole ark a-mov - in',

mov - in', mov - in', de ole ark a - mov - in', well, I thank Gawd!

3

Recit. Meno meno

f

1. How ma - ny days did de wa-tah fall? For-ty days an' nights an' all, Well de

a tempo

Meno meno

f

mp *a tempo*

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ole ark a mov-in', mov-in', mov-in', De ole ark a-mov-in' by de Spert o' Gawd, Well de

ole ark a-mov-in', mov-in', mov-in', de ole ark a-mov-in', well, I thank Gawd!

Recit. Meno mosso

a tempo

2. Ole ark she reel, de ole ark she rock, I see de ole ark when she made huh fus' start, Well de

Meno mosso

ole ark a-mov-in', mov-in', mov-in', De ole ark a-mov-in' by de Spert o' Gawd, Well de

ole ark a-mov-in', mov-in', mov-in', de ole ark a-mov-in', well, I thank Gawd!

start

Recit. Meno mosso

a tempo

3. Wa-tah riz up to de se-con flo'___ Wa-tah come in___ at de win-duh an' de do' Well de

Meno mosso

a tempo

ole ark a-mov-in', mov-in', mov-in', De ole ark a-mov-in' by de Spert o' Gawd, Well, de

repeat

parlando

ole ark a-mov-in', "Monuh why n't yuh come a-long" De ole ark a-mov-in', well, I thank Gawd!

Recit. Meno mosso

a tempo

No - ah, No - ah, can't yuh lem - me come in? Naw! De do's is locked an' de

Meno mosso

win-duhs ~~is~~ done a - pinn'd Well de ole ark a - mov - in', mov - in', mov - in', De

ole ark a - mov - in' by de Spert o' Gawd, Well de ole ark a - mov - in',

mov - in', mov - in', de ole ark a - mov - in', well, I thank Gawd!

4. Squirl he tote a Bushy Tail

.....

This song should be shouted at some distance from the audience.

- tote: an antiquated word for carry, still used by Southerners.
- bah - bare
- stumpy goes ole hyah: means, "the old hare has a stump of a tail."
- Yas, Lawd! - Yes, Lord! a common form of strong asseveration among the negroes.
- cote - court

4. Squirl, He Tote A Bushy Tail

Andante

1. Squirl, he tote_ uh bush - y tail, Pos-sum tail_ am bah,

Rac-coon tail am uhringed all round, Stump - y goes_ ole hyah

Yas, Lawd! Stump - y goes ole hyah.

2. Rac-coon am uh cun-nin' thing, He ram-ble in_ de dark No-thin' tuh dis - turb his min'

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'twel he heah muh lit - tle dog bark. Yas, Lawd!

'twel he heah muh lit - tle dog bark. 3. High - uh up de cher - ry tree,

Sweet - uh grow de cher-ry, Soon-uhyuh go cote dat gal, Soon - uh she will mar - ry.

Yas, Lawd! Soon - uh she will mar - ry.

5. Bookuh Red

.....

This tragic account of Booker's death and his widow's indifference is to be sung in a gay, light-hearted way. He was apparently not popular.

- wukkin' - working
- smoky road - railroad
- baby - sweetheart
- stannin' - standing
- mekkin' - making
- coolin' boa'd: "cooling board" means the planks on which the dead man is stretched out.
- hoodoo waggin: The "Hoodoo wagon" is the bad luck wagon.

5. Bookuh Red

Allegretto

mp

1. Boo-kuh Red,

he is dead, Don'-tchuh see de crape a-roun'' de wo-men's heads Ah Lawd!

cresc.

Ba-by__ I'm sa-tis-fied Don'-tchuh know dat I'm sa-tis - fied,

cresc.

dim.

When I'm by muh ba-by's side, Ah Lawd! ba-by__ I'm sa-tis - fied.

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2. Tole Miz Book-uh dat Book-uh wuz dead, She wuz stan-nin' in de kit-chen

mek-kin up bread Says Ah Lawd! ba - by ___ Im sa - tis - fied.

3. Ef yuh don'blieve dat Boo-kuh is dead, jes' look at dat hole in de back uv 'is head, Ah Lawd!

ba-by, ___ I'm sa-tis-fied. 4. Boo-kuh wuz wuk-kin on de smo-ky road, But dey

brought him home on de cool - in' boa'd Ah Lawd! ba - by, I'm sa-tis-fied.

5. His heels wuz up an' his toe-nails drag-gin', He wuz bot-tom side up in de

mp

hoo-doo wag-gin, Ah Lawd! ba-by, I'm sa-tis-fied, Don'tchuh know dat I'm sa-tis-fied,

cresc.

cresc.

dim.

When I'm by muh ba - by's side Ah Lawd! ba - by I'm sa-tis - fied.

dim.

6. De Bad Man's Ball

This epic account of a party in high colored circles may sound a little exaggerated. The exaggeration, however, (if any), is not mine, but must be laid at the door of our cook's son, Charlie, whose words were exactly as I have put them down.

dimons - diamonds
fum - from
wuz - was or were, as occasion demands
'cause - because
thu - through
long - along
chunk - lump
mouf - mouth
har - hair
puffec' - perfect
burr - negro girls catch up bits of their hair and wrap them about with strings. These "wraps" stand erect and give the head the look of a burr.
flo' - floor
fis' - fist
jes - just
razuh - the razor is a common weapon of the negroes.
brek - break
jamboree - party
goñ - I'm going to
coon - means both raccoon, an animal which figures largely in negro life, and sometimes as here, a negro himself.
skyuhed - scared
Sons uv' Res': The negroes are fond of forming societies among themselves, such as "The Sons of Rest," "Sons of Jacob," "Lilies of the Valley" (a lucus a non lucendo).

6. De Bad Man's Ball*

Allegro

mf

1. Ball wuz gi-b'm at de Bad Man's Hall Some folks call ___ it de

mp

Bad Man's Ball, Ball wuz gi-b'm by de Sons uv Res' an de

nig-guhs all come in duh Sun - day bes' 2. In come uh nig-guh name

mp

Slew-foot Pete, Strung wid di - mons fum 'is head to 'is feet, His

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*For the sake of greater sonority this song should be sung and played in F♯ major.

eyes wuz red an 'is gums wuz blue 'cause he wuz uh nig-guh right

thu___ an' thu 3.'Long come uh nig-guh name Bil-ly Go-helf,

mp

Coon wuz so mean, he wuz skyuheduvhis-self Load-ed wid ra-zuhs an

guns, so dey say 'cause he killed uh coon or two ev-ve-ry day.

4. In come uh gal__ she wuz big an' stout, Had uh chunk o' chewin' gum

in huh mouf; Huh har_ wuz so nap-pý't wuz uh puf - fec' burr, An'

none uv de dah-kies wouldn' dance wid huh. 5. She jump in de flo'__ an' she

dou-ble up huh fist, Says: you wan'to tes'yuh nerve, jes' jump uh-ginst this ef

some uv you nig-guhs doñ dance wid me, wid muh ra-zuhm goñ brek up this

Jam - bo - ree 6.She says I come_ fum uh bad bad lan', an muh

name is Ann E - li - za Stone, I'd have all you nig-guhs fuh tuh

un - duh-stand, I'm pret-ty mean wid muh ha - bits on, goñ

bring all de guns fum de bad-dle-ship Maine goñ tuh mek some you coons climb uh

tree; ef you dah to doubt muh re-pu - ta - tion I'm goñ

brek up dis Jam - bo - ree. 7. In come uh nig-guh name

mp

Slip - pe - ry Jim, None uv de gals wouldn dance wid him, He

re'ch in his po-cket, drew 'is thir - ty two, dem nig-guhs did'n run, Gawd!

how dey flew. 8. One ole sis-tuh went down th'ough de flo' de

mp

win' fum huh coat-tail blew o - p'n de do' 'long come uh cop an' 'res - ted

3

Slip - pe - ry Jim 'cause all de uh-thuh nig-guhs had done lef'_ but him.

7. Dat Lonesome Road

.....

Another pathetic song. The text is really lyrical.

- uv - of
- paht - part
- hev - have
- uh - I
- nuvvuh - never
- mek - make
- diffunt - different

7. Dat Lonesome Road

Adagio

p

1. Look down, look down dat lone - some road, Hang down my head an' cry Hang down my head an' cry. 2. De bes' uv frien's mus' paht some day, Den why not you an' I, Den

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why not you an' I? 3. Tell me, hon - ey,

ef you know what 'tis dat mek me love you so?

Tell me, ef_ you know. 4. Tell me, dah - lin'

ef you can what mek you so diff - unt fum

a-ny uh-thuh man? Tell me, ef you can. 5. True

love, true love, what hev I done To mek you treat me

so To mek you treat me so. 6. You've

made me walk dat lone - some road, Like uh nuv - vuh done be -

fo'_____ Like uh nuv. - - vuh done be -

pp sempre

fo'. 7. Look down, look down dat lone - some road, Hang

down my head an' cry_____ Hang

down my head_ an' cry.

8. Vanderbilt's Daughter

A railroad song which exists in many versions. I give the one the colored boys sing in Bedford County

dey - there
Santy Fee - Santa Fé: these two roads are Western Lines about which our negroes know nothing by their own experience. The C.& O. (-Chesapeake and Ohio) mentioned later is, however,Virginian.
am - is
dey - they, in this case.
'tel,or'twel - until
bumpuhs - bumpers: these are steel affairs which project between cars to hold them apart. The tramps ride on them.
'boes - hoboes: slang for 'tramps.'
ef - if
rawd - rod: steel rods run underneath the freight cars, and if you get shaken off them, the wheels are likely to run over you: You trust your lives in the hands of God.
cab - means the engine driver's box.
fiuh-man - fireman
neentuh 'feuh - need not fear
wawĩ - there wasn't
uh tall - at all
high-ball - "to git the high-ball" means to get the white light or the signal to go forward.
shuk - shook
mout - might (rhyme it with 'pout')
bofe - both
reverse - to be accented on first syllable
th'ew - threw
levuh - lever
jumbos - Jumbo was a large elephant in Barnum's Circus. Used here for large coal cars.
holluhd - to holluh (- halloo) means to call.
ben' - bend

8. Vanderbilt's Daughter

(A Railroad Song)

Allegro giocoso

1. Van - der - bilt's daugh-ter said be - fo' she died dey wuz two mo' roads dat she want - edtuh ride, When ev'-vy-bo-dy won-duh what roads demcould be, 'twuz de Eas' Co - lo-ray-do an' de San - ty Fee 2. De Eas' Co - lo-ray - do is de bes'___ uv all: Dey got uh train dey call de

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can-non ball, She run so fas' dat de pas-sen-gers cain see, cause dey

boun' tuh mek con-nec-tion wid de San - ty Fee. 3. Van-der - bilt said dat be-

fo' he died, He wuz goñ tuh fix de bum-puhs so de 'boes couldn' ride,

Ef dey ride dey haf tuh ride de rawd, an' trus' dey lives in de

han's uv Gawd. 4. Got up one maw-nin' 'twuz uh driz - ze - lin' rain,

Couldn' see no-thin' but uh C. an' O. train. Up in de cab wuz

ole Bill Jones he's uh good en - gi - ne - uh, but he's dead an' gawn.

5. Ole Bill Jones he wuz uh good en - gi - neuh, Says to de fiuh - man:

"Jim yuh neen-tuh feuh, All uh want is de boi - luh hot, Goñ to

mek it to de junc-tion by twelve o' - clock". 6. He run a hun-duhd miles be -

fo' he stopped, wañ but one mi-nute in be - tween de block,

he seh he wañ run-nin' uh tall, seys he give uh hun-duhd dol-luhs jes tuh

Honey in de Comb

1

Down in Alabama. whar de
yellow gal grow,
Gimme de honey in de comb
Whar de comin de fust an de
Tater in de row

Des a little mo honey in de comb
Oh! de yaller gal a goin, am a
gwinnin a long
Gimme de honey in de comb
& meber bruw & blue ter tell
& lub so long.
Des a little more honey in de comb

Chorus

Gimme de honey in de comb
Des a little mo honey in de
& meber bruw & blue ter tell
& lub so long.
Des a little mo honey in de comb

Mooi rein ~~an~~ (2) a Gailing round
de Tumbleing daun da.
Grimm de honeyin de comb
Oh! de firelight am playing
wid de shadows on de flo.
(1) Des a little mare honeyin de comb
Gaing sweep dat cabin clean
an yo mabe it right wham
Grimm de honeyin de comb
Kase my heart dis a honeying
to dat gal on de farm.
(1) Des a little mare honeyin
dis comb.

ouer
chorus

git de high ball. 7. He look at de wa-tah, an' de wa - tah wuz low,

look at his watch, an' de watch wuz slow, look at de fiuh-man an' he

shuk his head, said: "Jim, we mout mek it, but we'll bofe be dead." 8. He

ré-verse de en-gine, th'ew de le-vuh back twen-ty se-b'm jum - bos

jump'd de track, He hol-luhd to de fiuh - man, say: "Jim, yuh bet-ter jump, 'cause

two lo - co-mo-tives is a - bout tuh bump. 9. Ef dey bum' dey goñ tuh

ben' de rail, Ef dey bum' dey goñ tuh ben' de rail,

Ef dey bum' dey goñ tuh ben' de rail, Dey woñ be no-bo-dy liv-in' here tuh tell de tale.

Nº 1. LOW VOICE Nº 2. MEDIUM VOICE Nº 3. HIGH VOICE

Dedicated to and Sung by

MADAME MELBA

A CYCLE OF LIFE

FIVE SONGS

The Words by

HAROLD SIMPSON

The Music by

LANDON RONALD

Nº1. Prelude.
2. Down in the Forest...(SPRING)
3. Love I have won you....(SUMMER)
4. The winds are calling..(AUTUMN)
5. Drift down, drift down.(WINTER)

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1. ON ME HE SHALL NE'ER PUT A RING
2. YVONNE - YVETTE
3. TREASON AND PLOT
4. THE LOGICAL OWL

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