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DARKEY DITTIES

POEMS

BY

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AUTHOR OF

Plantation Echoes
Soliloquy of Satan
Dis, Dat and Tutter
Jes Plain Black Fo'ks
Uneducated Fo'ks
Humble Fo'ks
Darkey Meditations
Old Fashioned Black Fo'ks

COLUMBUS, OHIO

1915

A Darkey Jigg

Plinkertee, plinkertee
Plinkertee plunk!
Time foh de possum
An' de coon an' de skunk!
Pickahninnies rompin'
'Bout de a-corn tree,
Bullfrog says
It's mighty good here to be.

Duck says to gander
"Take o' drink! Take o' drink!"
Gobbler says de weddah's
Rinkeedink! Rinkedink!
Bluebird hollers
"Whah's yo' gwine? Whah's yo' gwine?"
Jay bird says, Nebbah mine! Nebbah mine!"

De nights sortah frosty
An' de moon shines pale,
De hound smells de possum,
An' done struck de trail.
It's high-ho Johnny
Let's go erlong too!
We'll roun' up Mistah Possum
Fo' de clock strikes two!

Ah Mistah Possum,
An' Ah! Mistah Coon,
It's "high-diddee-diddle"
We'll have yo' poordy soon!
De pot's on er bilein'
An' de sweeter tayters plenty.
Er rinkeedinkee 'cepshun,
Waitin' foh yo' in de shanty.

Twilight

Shadows drappin'
Sof'ly down,
Moonlight peekin' thew,
Birds an' bees
Is sleepin' soun',
Fo'kses 'bout, is few.

Barnyard rooster
Heshed his mouf
Gobbler quit his spattin',
Guinea pig an' all his fo'ks
Doze'n fas' er nappin'!

Yaller dog
Er prowlin' 'roun'
Howlin' lonesome lack.
Possum sneakin'
Lack he's 'fraid
Hound done struck his track!

Coon er tippin'
Sortah o' so,
'Pearin' sort o' cunnin',
Spies er darkey's track eroun',
An' takes out o' runnin'!

The Close of Day

Soft, soft the day
From earth takes flight,
From unknown heights
Slips down the night,
While sweet strains float
From heavenly choirs,
Fond holy hands
Light up the stars.

The flowers droop,
Their petals close,
Bird, beast and man
Seek sweet repose.
Calm and serene
All Nature sleeps,
While Heavenly hosts
Quiet vigil keep.

Let the Fiddle Go Squeak

Let de fiddle go squeak!
Let de fiddle go squawk!
Balance down de middle,
Cullahd fo'kses quit yoh talk,
While dey fixes up de possum
Fo' to serb us aftah while,
We'll dance Tom Sawyer
In de ol' fashion style.

Seems er fiddle's got charms
To make de ol' fo'ks lack de young,
Jes' give 'way to dey feelins
Till dey jes' git all unstrung,
An' de fus ting yo' know
You am started on de jump,
An' yo' jes' got to bobb
An' yo' jes' got to hump!

Cullahd fo'kses joice yo'se'ves
Shout de roof plum off de shanty!
Keep eyes on de white fo'ks
Won't yo' uncle, won't yo' auntie?
Kaze it's pickee, dillee dillee.
Not er cent foh yoh hide,
Ef de white fo'ks ketch us dressed up
Kickin' up diss fuss inside.

Whose dat er bobbin'
Down dis way in de crowd?
Now an' den er steppin'
Sortah friskee, sortah proud!
Ef it tain't Deacon Jones
Ah hain't nebbah eated chicken!
Does mah eyes deceive me,
Really's dat de deacon kickin'?

Ah nebbah knowed er fiddle,
Fo'ks could do so much befor'!
To make er pious deacon
Dance er jigge erpon de flo'!
It's got de deacon ac'in'
Lack he's tickled to de bone.
Done pawted wid his 'liggen
Foh er happy squeakin' tone.

A Change of Policy

Ah uster have de idea
Dat hospertalertee
Am er ting to love an' cherish,
Foh evah one yo' see,
To eat, drink an' be merry
Fum Peter down to Paul,
Jes' come in evahbody
An' he'p yo'se'ves to all.

Yo' know we ol' Verginians
Am noted foh sich pranks.
We don't do it to show off,
Ner do sich tings foh tanks.
We natchly lacks to do it
An' pow'ful good we feel,
To have er friend er stranger
Drap in an' eat er meal.

But don't yo' know Ah long since fo'ks,
Changed tactics long dat line,
Since Eldah Bowconstricter
Eat up ah geese an' swine,
Kaze de way he stuffed an' eat
He knocked de wind mos' out ob me,
An' Ah swo' Ahs thew wid diss hyah ting,
Called hospertallertee!

De way we come to ax him
To eat er bite er so,
He happened jes' to drap in
To find out an' to know,
De reason dat we fo'kses
We didn't come to church,
An' kose he said he's saunt out
To make er little search.

Well we axd him den to sot down,
An' try some ob ah fare.
But didn't have no idea,
Dat he'd eat more den his share.
But when he said, now sistah
Don't bodder tall 'bout me
Ah doesn't need no he'pin'
'Twont take yo' long to see.

Yo' bet er pewter dollah
It didn't take us long,
To find out dat de eldah
On eatin's pow'ful strong.
Kaze de way he fell to eatin',
Was lack er thrash merchine,
Er crunchin' an' er crushin'.
Er way dat's seldom seen.

He reached out for de chicken
An' clahd his tho'at er spell,
An' said now fo'ks mah eatin'
Will be somewhut "pell mell"!

Ez fas' ez yo' can fetch it
Ah'll 'stroy it fas' ez sin,
Yo' needn't wait er secun,
But keep er tote'n it in.

Ah's hyahd so much talk sistah,
'Bout yoh cookin' being so fine,
Dat Ah said Ah hoped de pribbledge,
Would one deez days be mine,
Ob drappin' in pertookin'
Ob er li'l' bite er so,
To tell de fo'ks erbout it,
An' praise yo' whah Ah go.

Jes' one mo' piece of chicken,
Mah sistah dat will do!
Ernuddah tace ob sausage,
Six biscuits an' Ah's thew!
Diss stuff Ah's eat diss mawnin'
Done reached de deepes' spot!
Ef Ah had jes' one mo' stummick,
Gawd knows, Ahd clean de pot!

Well when de eldah slowed up,
An' said well fo'ks Ah's thew!
Ah cried, "Well wife an' famly,
Dey hain't much lef' foh yo'!
De eldah said, "Well bruddah,
Don't worry 'bout dat tall.
De way yo' fed me freely,
De Lawd will bress yo' all!

A Retrospection

I sometimes think
While ponderin' over things
That the darky's 'bout ez happy's
Tho he had a pair wings.
Jes' er flippin' an' er floppin'
An' er swoupin' through the air
Without an' ounce of trouble,
And without a pound of care.

Trouble, trouble, trouble
Like a cyclone, come
But with all it doesn't seem to make
Him feel a bit glum.
He jes' dances and sings
And goes twiddle, twiddle, twiddle
Jes' the mention of a banjo
Or the squeak of a fiddle.

If he lives in a shanty
Not a nickel in his purse,
He just goes to singing',
"Well things could be worse!"
And smacks his lips as thankful,
'Pon the leavings in the pot
Just as tho he's been a feastin'
On the best a king's got.

It is kinder curious
After all don't you think,
How the darky seems glad,
In spite of trouble never shrinks!
Well it may be the Lord
Had a notion, thought it best,
To give him plenty gladness
To make his troubles seem less.

You talk about Heaven,
What a hokee-pokee time,
That the darky's going to have
When he get's where it's sublime,
But the darky isn't waitin',
To go to Heaven for his fun,
But he's havin' barrels o' joy
Before his earthly work's done!

It's a pretty good philosophy,
I guess after all,
To laugh and dance and frolic
When life seems bitter gall.
For it lightens many burden,
And drives 'way many trouble,
When a happy go-lucky feeling
In your soul keeps o' bubble!

I bet there's not a nation
On God's green earth,
Regardless of its surroundings
And regardless of its worth,

That can get out of life,
The sweetness to the core,
That the darky is o' getting,
'Though he's poorest of the poor.

White fo'ks have been o' trying hard
To figger out the thing,
How the darky with all his trouble
Still can pat his foot and sing,
Go jogging 'long the road
With a load upon his back,
And can slute you jolly, "high boss!"
And can plenty jokes crack.

But they're just killing time,
It's a riddle they can't guess,
For the more they try to figger it,
They'll know but less and less.
So the only thing to do,
Is to take this fact for granted,
That the seed of genuine joy's
Only in the negro planted.

A Plantation "Step-erbout"

De fiddles am er squeakin'
An' de banjo sounds fine!
Ol' fo'ks drapped dey crutches
Am er hoppin' into line.
An' de pranks an' de capeahs
Dey's er cuttin' roun' erbout,
You'd nebbah 'spect dey's bodderd
Wid de 'matticks er de gout!

Who'd ebber thunk it once,
Dat ol' man Jimpson Crown,
Could ebber tink ob gittin'
'Roun' so peert erpon de groun'?
Er creepin' lack er snail he's been,
Since way back sixty one,
He out jumps ol' man Hopp-Toad, now
An' tickled wid de fun.

Come Susan, hol' mah duster!
Dis ol' man mus' dance, too!
Dat debblish music's tickled me,
Till dares nuffin' else to do.
Ah know yo' tink it's foolish
Foh er man ez ol' ez me,
To do tricks lack de young fo'ks,
But ol' woman jes' watch me!

Hol' on, Uncle Jasper,
Yo' hain't ha'f so peert ez me!
Youse too slo' in bofe yoh footses
Wid too much crook in de knee.
Koch er hol' mah coat tail, sah!
Now dance it up an' down!
Let loose mah coat tail uncle,
Youse too slo' foh diss hyah 'roun'!

Come on Tootsy Rookey,
Let 'em see whut yo' can do!
Koch hol' de ol' man's duster
An' we'll swing it 'to an' to'.
Youse sholy flouncin' Tootsy
Jes' keep erlong wid me,
We'll safely reach de harbor
In de sweet, bee-an'-bee!

Yoh beau am gittin' jealous
But don't pay no mine to dat!
Kaze youse mah dimple-derry,
An' Ah kyeers ner titt, ner tatt!
Keep er plinkin' at de banjo,
Let de fiddles whine an' cry,
Kaze Ahs happy ez er jay bird,
Stealin' crackers on de sly.

Now slute yoh partners Tootsy,
Time to balance down de middle.
Swing it little mo',
We'll go twiddle, twiddle, twiddle!

Ahs jes' gittin' in de spirit,
An' de capeahs dat we's done,
Hain't nuffin' dat we'll show 'em,
'Fo' we's ha'f thew diss fun.

Possum, sweet pertayters.
Yo' say am in de kitchen?
Come on Tootsy Rookey,
It's time to quit diss switchin'!

Some Negro Characteristics

I some times think
That in this old world of strife
That the Negro, alone,
Gets real sweetness out of life,
For the simple good reason,
That with just a little bit,
He's always in good spirits
And a bustin' out with wit!

Why, he'll dance and sing
If he hasn't got a cent
To pay for his "britches,"
Or to pay for the rent.
While the white man's a-worrying
Because he's got no more,
The Negro is rejoicing—singing—
"All's Honkeedore!"

He's happy-go-lucky
If it rains or it shines;
If otherwise in spirit
Why he doesn't show no sign.
If compelled to feast on "middlins"
Instead of eating chicken
He licks his chops contented,
Goes on eating without kicking.

The lightning can flash,
And the thunder can roar,
And the winds raise the mischief,
Threaten to break in the door;
But he'll just cross his legs
And sit back 'side the wall
As though he isn't bothered
As to what come at all!

That the Negro's constituted
Peculiarly, why, there's no doubt—
Under the most discouraging features
He will sing, rejoice and shout!
It seems he has the knack
To make trouble tuck his tail and run,
And look on in a jolly mood
And seem to e'joy the fun.

When he gets muddled,
Or when he gets blue,
He don't fetch his troubles roun,
To pester me and you,
But he totes right along,
With a whistle or a song.
As though things are right,
And nothing's gone wrong.

If he's got the rheumatism,
If he's got the chronic gout,
Don't matter how they pester
In church meeting, he can shout!

Just fling his legs like sixty,
Throw his crutch and cane away,
And shout 'long with the fastest
From midnight plum till day.

If his burden gets so heavy,
That it bends him nigh mos' double,
He jogs along o' singing
"Umph, it's trouble, trouble, trouble!"
De good Lawd's gwine to fotch us out
All right bye and bye!
Keep er inchin' erlong, keep er inchin' erlong,
Don't weep, don't moan, ner sigh!

It isn't because the Negro
Doesn't have ups and downs,
That he doesn't seem to worry
And seldom seems to frown.
For the Negro has had
A pretty hard row of stumps,
To get up 'bove the level
Of the knocks and the bumps!

He's had a lot of ups and downs
Too numerous for to mention,
But he has plodded right along,
A trying to 'void contention.
In spite of all the crooks and turns,
Of all the rough and tumble
Through devious ways he has been raised
From depths most grim and humble!

But there are times some things are done
Which go against his grain,
That rile him up and make him sore,
Because strikes deep the pain;
But soon it passes as the storm
And he forgets the sting,
With heart and soul he tugs away,
And pats his foot and sings.

He has sung a song,
For decades in this clime,
"You may have all the world
Gimme Jesus all the time."
Some people take it
As a pretty good joke!
Say he's got all of Jesus,
All the "world," the white folk!

But he's waking up,
He's opened his eyes!
He's getting broad,
He's getting wise!
And long since learned
That money gotten right,
To take along with Jesus
For to help him out his plight!

So as a final
To this scribble
I will add
Just one more ripple!

In true language
I will say,
Now understand,
I don't gainsay,

I am a Negro
Plum to the core!
My Gracious Master
I adore,
That He has made me
What I am
A true born son
Of the race of Ham!

Banjo Ditty

Deys nuffin' dat am beddah
Fo' to dribe erway de muddles,
To git you out de mire
An' to fotch you out de puddles,
Den to caper to de music
Ob an' ol' banjo,
When de music's quick an' ticklish
An' it 'taint er bit slo'!

How it's plinkertee, plink!
An' it's plunkertee, plunk!
Gits you hoppin' an' o' bobbin'
Till you feel hunkeedunk!

When de day drags slo',
An' de hours solemn lak
An' de shaddahs dawk an' gloomy,
Settle roun' erbout yo' shack,
An' de rain drizzles down
Wid it's pitter, pitter pattar
Ef you den can hyah de banjo
How you lonesum feelin' scattahs!

Kaze it's plinkertee, plink!
An' it's plunkertee, plunk!
Gits you hoppin' an' o' bobbin'
Till you feel hunkeedunk!

When de banjo plays de ditty,
"Uncle Kech, Sally Brown"
An' de uddah, "Stan' Back Young Foks"
Slute de ol' fo'ks come to town?"
An' evahbody's drappin' in
Er hoppin' 'bout with ease,
An' you hyah de call er coming',
"Slute yoh poddnahs ef you please!"

How it's plinkertee, plink!
An' it's plunkertee, plunk!
Gits you hoppin' an' o' bobbin'
Till you feel hunkeedunk!

A Regrettable Invitation

Speakin' bout hoghead
Puts me in de mine,
Ob de time ah's mawlin' rails,
B'low de Mason-Dixon line.
One day ah fotchd er hoghead, home,
When Mandy says to me,
Let's hab er hoghead supper,
An' vite obber, Eldah Lee!

Ah said umph! Dat's jimdandy!
Ah's got no jeckshens tall!
Ah tinks ahd lak to hab de Eldah
Drap in fo' er call!
Ah bleeb it's time dat we should show
Our good will toward de brudder,
An' 'sten an' inbertayshun, now,
Widdout er waitin' fudder!

So Mandy hopped an' jumped erbout
Er singin' an' er smilin',
An' put de pots and skillet on,
An' soon had tings er bilein'!
She's dabblin' hyah, she's dabblin' dare,
Er tarnin' dis way an' tudder,
While de hoghead bilein' in de pot
Kep' saying', "spudder! spudder!"

We sent ah li'l' Rastus out
To tell de Eldah Lee,
To fotch his wife an' family, obber,
To ah shack fo' tea!
We barely got tings fixed up right,
When long comes Eldah Lee,
An' hopps into ah shanty, says,
"We am done come, you see!

Ah hopes you all will skewze us,
Ef wees li'l' head ob time.
Ah spoze it makes no diffunce,
An' you 'sidders it no crime!
When Rastus said er hoghead feas'
Was waitin' fo' us all,
Ah made mah mind up ahd be hyah,
Ef fo'ks, ah had to crawl!

Ah 'seeved yoh immitation
Jes' befo' de clock struck fow!
An' ah tole mah wife an' fambly
Dat ah 'spec' weed beddah go.
Ah knows yoh latch string, brudder's
Allus danglin' out fo' me!
An' it makes me feel ez tickled
An' ez happy ez can be!

You all since ah's been preechin' hyah,
Hab treated me so nice,
Dat ahd lak to be yoh preechah
Twice ez long ez Eldah Fice!

It seems to me mah bruddah,
Dat ah's been hyah all mah life!
An' longs you feed us diss erway
We sho' won't hab no strife!

You know ah is yoh shepherd
An' you all am some mah flock!
So keep er plenty hoghead, chickens,
All sich stuff in stock!
You kno' de scripshure pintly says,
'Gawd's lams mus' all be fed!
So you am carryin' out dem sweet words
In 'vitein' us to dis spread!"

At las' ah said "sot down you fo'ks
Dey haint no use ob waitin'!"
De eldah said, "You're right mah fren,
'Bout date we'll hab no d'batein!
Jes' sot me near dat hoghead,
Ef you hab no superstishen!
It seems in diss ol' world, mah fren,
Dat eatin's mah special mission!"

Umph! When he opened up his mouf,
Commenced to ax de bressins,
'Twas den ah felt down in mah heart
Er feelin' mos' distressin'!
He said, "Oh Lawd, sich stuff ez diss,
Am mannah fum on high!
'Recpt mah tanks fo' sich good luck,
Dat hab not passed me by!

“Ah loves to kno’ dat hyah below,
Wees got some milk an’ honey!
An’ dat it tain’t all up erbove,
Whah de streets am gold an’ sunny!
We want some good tings ‘fo’ we leave
Diss hyah ol’ worl’ ob trouble!
Tote some mo’ hoghead, chickens ‘roun’,
An’ make ah pohshen double!”

He litt into dat hoghead
An’ jes’ toh it all to pieces
He put de mos’ erpon his plate,
Said, mah fren’ ah now beseeches,
You do de waitin’ on de res’,
Dat am mo’ to yoh lackin’,
Ah’ll he’p mahse’f an’ eat right on,
An’ keep some jokes er crackin’!

Diss hoghead goes right to de spot!
Ah kain’t leeb off er secun!
Ef you don’t stop me, dog mah skins,
Ah’ll eat it all, ah reckun!
Kose you don’t mine dat ah presumes,
Beings it’s mah choices’ meat.
Ah knows it does you pow’ful good
To see yoh Pawson eat!

He fotched all ob his chillun ’long,
’Bout sixteen pickahninnies!
Umph! Mussy me! how dey did eat!
Dey stuffed lak ducks and guineas!

Dey licked dey chops, dey
Licked de plates, dey licked dey fingers, too!
De Eldah cried, keep eatin' fo'ks
Lawd knows we's jes' ha'f thru!

Well then dey rizz up fo' to go,
Ah sho' gawd felt lak shoutin'!
De way dey eat, dey made me mad,
Ah's swelled up an' er poutin'.
In fac' ah's mad ernuff to fight!
An' ef day'd kep' on eatin',
Ahd smacked dem chillun 'way fum dare,
An' gibb de paws'n er beatin'!

Dey eat much ez er dozen dogs,
Six hogs two mules besides.
Ah wandered how dey ebber put,
All dat stuff in dey hides.
Ah swo' dat preechah and his fo'ks,
Done eat dey las' wid me.
An' when dey filed out, said good bye,
Ah cried, thank God we're free!

Well whut dey lef'
Dey wouldn't been,
Ernuff to grease er nickel!
De only ting, dey didn't tech,
Was jes' one poh small pickle!
De nex' time dat ah has hoghead,
You bet yoh coon skin jacket,
Ah'll 'vite no body but mahse'f,
Ah don't care who don't lack it!

Sich an Itchin' in Mah Shin

Sich er itchin' in mah shins
Sich er ticklin' in mah feet!
Kaze de music ob de ragtime
Is so poody an' so sweet!
Dey hain't nuffn' dat am sweetah
Fo' to make you hop and jump
Den de music ob de ragtime
When it's comin' thumppee-te-thump!

Sich er bobbin' up an' down!
Sich er swingin' to an' fro'
Cullahd fo'ks is mighty happy
When dey's makin' sich er sho'!
Dey's 'bout ez nigh heaven
Ez dey ebbah wants to be.
Den it's "Go day, God send Sunday,
Ebbah day is juberlee!"

Dat's de cullahd fo'kses music!
White fo'ks go way, leeb it lone!
You hain't got er bit ob business
Techin' not er single tone.
You jes' go 'long wid yoh music
Dat you calls de "klassahkal,"
While we bundles up ah "rag time"
An' goes "Gittin' Over Sal!"

Why dat music, go way honey,
Makes you feel jes' lack you flyin'!

Lack you bobbin' up to glory
Wid er feelin' satisfyin'!
An' you doesn't care er particle
Wheddah you ebbah stop er tall!
Jes' so longs you keeps er gwine,
An' you doesn't slip er fall!

Why de music ob de rag time's
Got er happy-go-lucky snap!
Dat jes' drags you out yoh dozes,
An' jes' pulls you out yoh nap!
An' de wise jes' lack de foolish
Bofe will kick an' squerm 'eroun,'
When er fiddle, band er banjo
Monkeys wid its raggitty soun'.

Kose you sometimes may ax scanlous,
Give yoh feelins sich er slack
Dat de folks er lookin' at you,
Tink yoh mind is jumped de track!
But ez long ez you is tickled
You don't mine it you don't kyeer,
Kaze it he'ps you 'long wid trouble
Fills yoh heart plum full ob cheer!

Dat's de reason dat de rag time
Puts fo'ks in er jolly vain,
Kaze its got de snap an' ginger
Dat is simple sweet an', plain!
It tain't stuck up lack dat music
Wid er highkerfloatin' tone,
But it keeps down wid de plain fo'ks
So dey understan' it's moan.

When Summah's Come

Wintah's gone!
Summah's come!
Feel's lack waltzin',
Dancin', some!
White fo'ks, black fo'ks,
Ol' an' glum,
Is tickled lack de mischief
When Summah's come!

Blue bird singin'
Lack de cullahd fo'ks!
Jay bird talkin'
Lack he's tellin' jokes!
Woodpeckah drummin'
Lack er deacon wid his cane,
Dat's er rappin' fo' de liniment
To rub erway his pain.

Whut's dat de bull frog's
Sayin' in de swamp?
Cullahd fo'ks it's time
Fo' to play, an' to romp!
De goose hang's high
An' de melon's 'bout due!
Whut's de use o' workin'
When you don't ha'f to!

Fox an' de groun' hog,
Tip toein' 'roun',
Lack dey's li'l' bit skyeerd
Dey'll meet mistah hound.
Dey hain't no tellin'
Whut de hound might do
Ef dey meet him ah's er tinkin'
T'would be cockle-doodle-doo!

De day's so fine
An' de season's done come,
Ah tinks it's 'bout time
To do er li'l' fishin' some!
When de sun shines on
Bofe sides ob de street,
Bass an' suckahs
Am bitein' poordy sweet!

Wintah's gone!
Summah's come!
Feels lack waltzin',
Dancin', some!
White fo'ks, black fo'ks,
Ol', an' glum,
Is tickled lack de mischief
When summah's come!

Crispus Attucks

Ye sons of Adam's mighty race,
Unfettered by God's munificent grace,
Have ye forgot that noble sire,
Who filled with patriotic fire,
Struck first the blow for freedom's cause
To abrogate the tyrant's laws?
If such there be let him be shunned,
By every loyal patriot son!
He is not fit for freedom's clan,
Who forgets the deeds of such a man!

Heaven hath decreed through Adam's fall,
Each race for a spell must bear the thrall.
Through blood and tears it must be freed,
By brave magnanimous, generous deeds.
Hear ye! the cry from thralldom's plain,
"Arise ye slaves, shake off thy chains!"
While tyrants tremble, cringe and groan,
Dismayed they totter on their thrones!
Against tyranny, that great revolt,
Rushed like the mighty thunder bolts,
And like a vesuvius in eruptive state,
It left the foe most desolate!

Liberty, the invigorating elixir sweet!
Descended from heav'n's mercy seat,
The boon for which all mankind thrives,
Bought by the blood of countless lives,

Inspired that act which broke the spell,
For which brave Crispus Attucks, fell.

Well didst he strike! This martyr brave,
Couldst he but rise up from his grave
Behold his country disenthralled,
In majesty and sweet content
'Mid scenes most glorious, eloquent,
Filled with an unctuous holy joy
To sweeter dreams he could lie down,
Through evening shades pass to yon shore
Receive the well earned martyr's crown.

Who was this man whose deeds we trace?
He was of Ethiopia's race,
Whose sons have suffered, bled and died,
To help make this land unified!

Ye sons of Ethiopia's race,
Arise with dignity and grace!
Since from beneath the chastening rod
Ye have been raised by mighty God,
Heaven expects thee to help rear,
The mighty structure building here!

His body sleeps beneath the sod,
O'er which no tyrants cohorts trod.
Though dead, yet he is more alive
Than when on earth he did here strive.
The blow he struck for freedom's band,
Still goes resounding through the land.
To those unborn it shall proclaim
"Liberty for all" in Heaven's name.

His deeds shall shine like that great light
Which bursts from Pisga's lofty height.
The encircling gloom cannot obscure
Its light that shines for ever more.

So let His deeds pour souls inspire!
Filled with a patriotic fire,
First, last and always, ever be,
A negro! Proud of your ancestry!

Liberty enthroned the great jubilate
Is sung by the Angels as they congregate,
Around the portals of the Lord
And strike their harps with one accord!

Write with a vigor, with a fire,
The name of this redoubtable sire!
Upon the page ascribed to those,
Who died to lift a nation's woes!

De Bes' State in de Lan'

Ah comes from ol' Virginnee,
De bes' state in de lan'!
Whah fo'ks hain't skyahd to meet you,
Hain't erfraid to shake yo' han'.
Dey's jes' plain an' ol' fashion,
Dey don't put on no airs,
Wid fo'k's dat do, you bet yo' life
Dey's got no time to spare.

Why down in ol' Virginnee,
Why, it's "come in! howdee-you-doo!"
Hab er bite ob sumpun, fo' yo' journey you
pursue!

Jes' stay long ez you mine to,
You neen't pay er cent!
Jes' make yo'se'f one ob us
An' we all, will feel content!
An' feed yo'? lawd er massy chile!
Dey don't konw when to stop!
It's hab some mo, dat hog head, brudder,
Hab er nudder chop!
Den fus'ting yo'll hyah ol' uncle, say,
Chile, is you skyahd to eat?
Ef you don't eat up all ah pass,
You'll i'sult ol' Uncle Pete!

Den nex' hyah comes ol' granny

Wid some egg pone jes' lak gol'!
Some mustard greens wid bacon
An' some good ol' fat hog jowl!
An' by de time she's fotchd yo'
Plenty chicken, plenty gobbler,
Bejinks yo' hain't got room ernuf
To stuff down apple cobbler.
Poordy soon yo'll see ol' granny,
Sof'ly steal out in de kitchen,
Tain't long fo' she's totein' back,
Jes' er rahin' back jes' er switchin'.
Den ol' uncle ejacerlates,
"Sho' ez ah's born to die"
Sookeeryah, Loocy Jane,
Whah am mah Rock an' Rye?"

Den granny kinder teasin' lak
Pokes out er dimmejohn.
An' uncle clahs his tho'at dat sounds
Bout lak er cracked fox horn.
An' says, "dis takes all de kinks
Out de back!
So pass yo goards
An' hab jes' er smack"!
It's good fo' de rich,
It's good fo' de po'!
Go back in de kitchen Lizea
Fotch us all some mo'.

Dat's de way dem fo'kses treat yo',
Dey want to see yo' joy yo'se'f!
Eat an' drink jes' all yo' mine to
Long ez anyting is lef'.

Yo' bet dey's allus got er barrel ob
Grub eroun' de shanty!
Summer, winter, spring er fall,
You nebber find it scanty
You go to church, to Sunday meetin',
Ebbry body wants to meet yo'!
Dey don't wait fo' yo' to speak fus'
But dey tote right up an' greet yo'!
Dey don't stan' off er lookin' lak
Yo' was some alligator,
Erfraid to git up close to yo',
Lak yo's er spile pertater.

Yo'll find dem zackly lak ah tells yo'
Ez ol' fashion ez de dickens!
Don't kyah ef yo's poh ez snakes,
Er rich ez Peter Diggins!
It hain't yo' clothes de's lookin' at,
Ner at yo' eddeerkeyshen.
But good hoss sense an' propah ways
Whut wins dey admiration!

Ahs been up hyah in dis hyah state,
Ahspec' poord nah fow years er so.
Deez fo'kses to git quainted wid,
Dey sho' Gawd knows am mos' powful slo'
Ah kaint git use to dem at tall,
Dey ac's too ristercratic fo' me.
Ahd rudder be bodderd wid yaller jackets
Er stung in de ankle
Wid er bumble bee!
Dat's why yo' dadd an' me's sich pallies.
Kaze de fus' time dat ah struck diss town,

Er stranger, he walked up to me,
Says' howd doo brudder which way's yo's bound?

Why he jes' made me feel right dah
We'd bofe been 'quainted forty yeahs.
It did mah ol' heart so much good,
Ah mus' hab drapped some joyful tears!
Ah knowed right dah, yo' daddy's
Some de ol' Virginnee stock!
When he frowed his mouf wide open,
An' he den commenced to talk.
Zackly lak dem fo'ks down yonder,
It was, "come go home wid me!
We'll fill up de pots an' skillets
Fill yo' up till yo' kain't see!

Ef dey all was lak yo' daddy,
Wid er smile an' frenly han',
Dog mah cats, an' string terbaccer!
Ah don't bleeb ahd leeb diss lan'.
Kaze he's jes' de sort o' pusson
Dat can make yo' feel at home,
Till yo' feel jes' lak er settlin' down,
Wid feelin's not to roam!

'Way Down Souf

Sing dat song once mo', Miss Mandy,
Jes' once mo', jes' ef yo' please!
Sounds ez sweet ez angel whispers,
An' de song birds 'mong de trees,
It kyahs ma back! way back yonder,
Way down Souf!

Whah we tromped thoo' de cotton fields,
An' when ah hearts was sad,
We sing'd dat chune
Fo' to make ah souls glad,
Way down Souf!

Yo' know nuffin' 'bout dem days, Miss, Mandy,
Dat was befo' yo' time!
'Sides yo's been r'ared
In er diffun' clime!
Yo' nebbah had to wock fum de fus' horn blo'
Lake we uster had to wock
Till de sun sink'd low,
Way down Souf!

But we had good times, Miss Mandy,
Sum good ol' times fo' sho'!
But ol' Missy an' ol' Massa,
We didn' let 'em know.
Yo' bet we's mighty kyahful
When we had ah dance an' feas',
Dat ol' Missy an' ol' Massa
Didn't git an inklin' in de leas'!

When Ah hyah dat chune, Miss Mandy,
Ah wants to step erbout,
An' do jes' lak de ol' fo'ks,
Ez dey uster sing an' shout,
Way down Souf!

I kin see dem now!
Ez dey raised dey voice to sing,
An' sot de ol' big cabin
In one great big ring!
Way down Souf!

But dem days done gone, Miss Mandy!
Dey's gone lak er dream.
An' de ol' fo'ks,
Done crossed de stream!
But doh dey's gone,
An' ah's lef' erlone,
An' ol' age creeped
In mah ebbry bone,
Dey's a hankerin' feelin'!
Keeps er dribein' me back,
Way down Souf!

When er dahky is ol'
An' his step comes slo',
An' he totters lak er reed,
When de sof' winds blow,
An' all his ties ob erf am dead,
An' fo'ks all strange
Whah ebber he tread,
It's de ol' time chune,
Wid er clah' keen knack!
Dat makes yo' feel new.
'Peahs yo' youth come back,
Way down Souf!

When de Fiah Am Kindlin' Hot

When de sno' it am er fallin',
Winds er whizzin' down de lanes,
An' de fros' it am freezin'
Fo' yo' eyes erpun de panes,
Whut am beddah den er neslin'
'Roun' er fiah dat's roas'in' hot?
Fo' er pickahninny dahky
Hain't er mo' enchantin' spot.

When de breezes am er moanin'
An' de sun am sinkin' lo',
An' de gloomy clouds an' shaddahs
Geddah 'roun' erbout yo' do';
When yo' hyeah de co'n er poppin',
See de cidah all er foam,
In yo' soul de joy an' gladness
Seems eroun' erbout to roam.

An' yo granny am er hummin',
Cat er purrin' on de rug,
An' yo' git er sniff de burbun
Dat am steamin' fum de jug—
Umph! de berry 'maggahnayshun
Makes er puson think it's real.
It am glory! Hesh yo' mouf' sah,
Doan' yo' ax me how yo' feel.

All yo' troubles an' yo' burdens
Seems to take de swif'es flight!
'Pears yo' berry soul am lif'ed
To de blissful mountain heights!
Whah de lan's erflo' wid honey,
Streets an' alleys paved wid gol',
An' de simphonnies o' heaben's
Got er sweetnes' kaint be tol'.

Yo' kin sing de song o' Moses,
Shout yo'se'f clah to de sky!
Pickahninny's den in cloveah,
No time den to weep an' sigh.
Let de sno' keep on er fallin',
Let de breezes whizz an' moan,
Longs' er pickahninny's neslin'
'Roun er hot fiah ub his own.

Reminiscence

When de shadows ub de e'ebnin's
Gently, sof'ly fallin' 'roun',
'Cross de lonely field an' meadows,
Cums de cattle's lowin' soun';
An' de vespah bells am ringin'
An' dey blen' in tuneful lay,
It's a knell dat's sad an' mournful
To de dying summah day.

An' yo' weary fum de labah
Ub de tillin' ub de soil,
Fum sun up 'till time ub sinkin'
Wifout res' mus' toil an' toil;
How yo' welcum on de hours,
Blissful seezuns all ub res'
When a neslin' 'neef de kibbahs,
Yo' kin soff'en pillahs press.

When de li'l' lights ub hebun
Fum behine day kibbah peep,
All er blinkin' an' er twinklin'
Ez dey 'cross de hebuns creep;
Dah's a sadden feelin' takes yo',
Ez yo' lonely sot an' sigh,
Ez yohr mem'ry goze to 'fleck'in
Ub de olen days gone by.

How yohr ole home cums befo' yo'
Wif de fiah-place all erf'ame,
Ez it kindled an' enliven'd
Yo' into a joyful frame;
An' de scene at night when gaddahd
All eroun' yohr mammy sot,
Ez she tole yo' little stohries,
Allus chahms de little tot.

Seemz yo' hyeah de old fo'ks singin',
An' dey voices ringin' clah,
Ez at night all knelt togeddah
Fo' to ax de mahstah's kyah,
To puzzurb dem fum de ebil
Spirits lurkin' far an' neer;
Keep dey minds all free fum feelin's
Soopahstishun an' fum feer.

How yo' long yo's wif de dahkies
Once mo' geddahd in de field,
When at night all in de moonlight,
Danced de ole Virginny reel;
To de plumpin' ub de banjos
An' de fiddle's sawin' choon,
An' de songs dat wuz trumphun'
To de ole plantayshun coon.

How yo' wish'd to 'gain libb obah
Dem days at yo' ole home spot,
Wif yo' frends dat's cross'd de ribbah,
Wuz again yo' happy lot ;
But dem days hab gone fohebbah,
Nebah mo' will dey return,
When yo' sot an' 'fleck erbout 'em,
How yo' ole heart fo' dem yern.

In Memoriam

TO THE LATE PAUL L. DUNBAR

God from His mighty throne looked down,
And plucked him as the blushing flower ;
Solemn as death, grievous and awed,
Was made a grateful race that hour.

This is a debt we all must pay—
The rich, the high, the low—
The exit from this world to that
Of happiness or woe.

'Tis for the soul of spotless white,
Cleansed pure as Heaven's holy spheres,
To walk the streets beyond the void
Bereft of sighs, bereft of tears.

Brilliance of mind beyond discount,
The birthright of this noble son,
Forged verse which moved the hearts of men,
And brought him laurels truly won.

Deeds of potency and power
Wrought he 'mid clouds of dire despair,
Upon successes sun kissed heights
He found at last a welcome there.

Verse flowed as magic from his pen,
Encouching sweet and beauteous thought,
Of negro life before the days
When struggling men for freedom fought.

As long as history endures
He there shall find abiding place;
Plaudits and honor e'er for him—
The greatest poet of his race.

Not in monumental stone,
Not in history alone,
But in our loving, grateful hearts,
He there shall live—shall find a throne.

Bury him in a hallowed spot,
Where devastation cometh not,
In a picturesque vale where nature in sublimity
Stands out in wondrous bold relief,
The enshinement of him
Whose life was brief.

Meditation

We gaze upon the shining orbs
That guild the depthless welkin dome,
Survey that grand ethereal space where countless
 hosts angelic roam,
Where symphonies, rythmical songs,
The chants, the lays, beyond compare,
And ask in wonder what is man's fate?
Has he blissful future state?

Creations of the Divine hand
Tell us above all worlds doth tow'r
The King of Kings with sovereign pow'r,
Where e'er He wills dispersing night,
Guiding the worlds in their swift flight.

Ay, man reads in the rocks, the hills, each blade
 of grass,
The flower, the murmuring stream, the truth
 personified—
"Futurity" for they the just, the pure, the
 glorified.

Thus man lives on and on,
Prophetic of the robe, the crown,
Sublimities which have no bound,
The Jasper walls, the Heavenly throne,
The universe's foundation stone.

Soft Falls the Night

Soft falls the night—
And chases 'way
The slowly dying
Summer day;
The sun from his
Ethereal height
Is curtained
By the shades of night.

Soft falls the night—
The birds that tune
Their songs to nature
In commune,
Now hush their lays,
Seek silent rest
Within their downy,
Leafy nests.

Soft falls the night—
The starry hosts
Creep 'cross the dome
Like silent ghosts;
And on and
Like sheep they stray—
Within their wake
Cast silvery rays.

Soft falls the night—
A peaceful sleep
O'er earthly mortals
Doth now creep;
They rest now from
Their day's pursuit,
The world is still!
The world is mute!

Soft falls the night—
The verdure green
Now glistens with
A dewy sheen;
The flowers droop,
Their petals close,
They dream away
In sweet repose.
Soft fades the night—
Lo! breaks the dawn!
And Nature 'wakens
With the morn;
Exultingly sends up
Her lays,
Her symphonies
To God in praise.



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