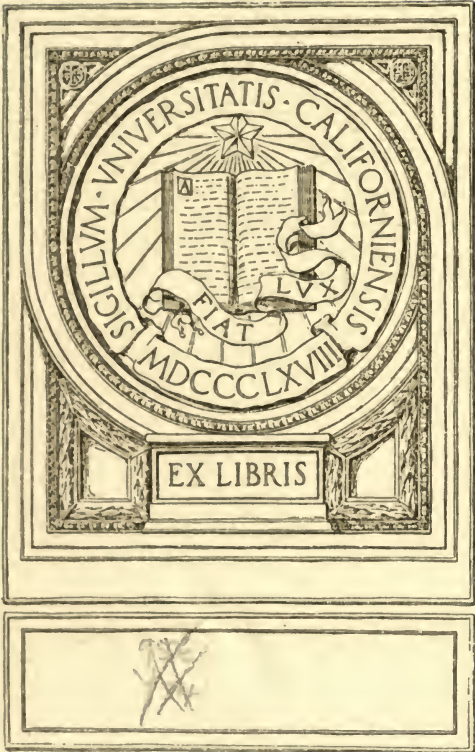


BEHIND
THE DARK
PINES



MARTHA YOUNG



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BEHIND THE DARK PINES



“‘Think twict befo’ you speak onct.’”

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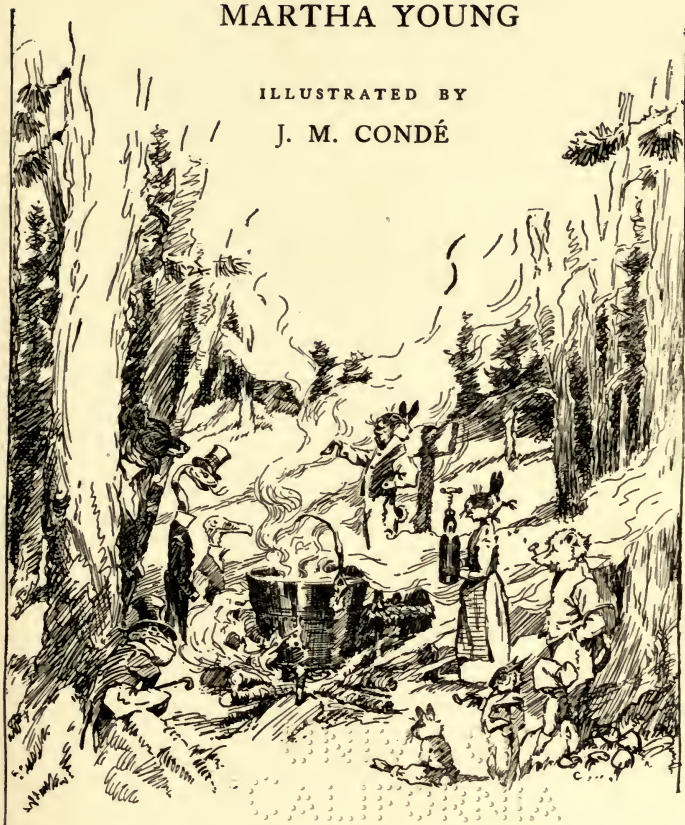
BEHIND THE DARK PINES

BY

MARTHA YOUNG

ILLUSTRATED BY

J. M. CONDÉ



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TO THE
AUTHORS

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MAIN

THESE TALES
ARE WITH AFFECTION INSCRIBED
TO THE LITTLE GIRL
WHO LOVES THEM BEST
JULIA YOUNG CORLEY

333701

PREFACE

“BEHIME the dark pines,” that was the way Mammy loved to begin her stories. “Behime de dark pines, chillen, behime de dark pines.”

That was where the rabbits lived and kept house queer ways. That was where the rabbits wore clothes, ragged clothes. That was where Mister Mocking Bird told tales and made trouble for all his bird neighbors. That was where the snake-doctor cured his patients. That was the land of all delightful probabilities—“behime the dark pines.” It was easy for the children who heard Mammy’s stories, half believing them, to believe also that the land of all mystery lay just behind that belt of pines. It bordered our whole horizon. We never got beyond, we never saw behind it, we little Southern children who listened to Mammy’s stories. Travel as we would from

PREFACE

coast town to country house to visit our kith and kin, we were always hemmed in by the dark pines.

To this day, for me, all mystery, all maybes, all the beautiful strange unknown that the world may hold lies—just “behime the dark pines.”

MARTHA YOUNG.

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BEHIND THE DARK PINES

I

WHY BRER RABBIT WEARS A ROUND-ABOUT

BRER RABBIT wa'n't al'a's de prankin', tricky feller he is now. Not him, he was rankin' wid de biggoty onct. He didn't wear no short-tail round-about dem days. Not him, he was buttoned up befo', and swingin' round de behime same as any long-tail broad-cloth nigger preacher is now. He was a good un to rise and foller den. He special lay down de law to his fambly and his folks.

One night Miss Rabbit she done stepped 'crost Quarters to beg Miss Goat fer a pail er fresh milk. Mister Rabbit he had all his chillen settin' in a row befo' him tellin' 'em how dey bes' do to live long an' git wise besize.

He standin' wid his back to de fire; he done des made dem chillen cut a big back log and put

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

in de light 'ood chunks a top dat back log. He wa'n't no worker even den. He stand frontin' dem li'l' rabbits, tellin' 'em way dey gotter live ter thrive. He say: "Chillen, al'a's you do dis. 'Think twict befo' you speak onct." Li'l' rabbits all settin' 'wid goose flesh risin' on 'em for lack er de fire heat dey pa keep off 'em standin' befo' 'em.

He say: "Dar was Sis Mole. She speak fust 'fo' she think, and she say she too proud ter walk *on* de ground, she was put *under* de ground." He say: "Dar was Mister Mockin' Bird. He speak onct 'fo' he think twict, and he up and sing de birds' notes—he keepin' up de interest on dem notes twel yit." He say: "Dar was Mister Robin say he choose a red vest 'fo' he think what choice was de bes'."

All dem li'l' rabbits set des as solemn, thinkin' twict 'bout what dey pa say.

Miss Rabbit she come runnin' home 'crost Quarters. She say: "I see smoke! I smell fire!" She bust in de do'.

Ole Brer Rabbit he yit standin' 'fo' de fire. Brer Rabbit's coat-tail was afire, was burnt off clean round de frock, a rim er fire, still creepin' up and round. Miss Rabbit she say:

RABBIT WEARS A ROUND-ABOUT

“Chillen, didn't you smell smoke?
Chillen, why didn't you spoke?”

Li'l' Rabbits say: “Us thinkin' 'caze Dad tell us ter think twict 'fo' us spoke onct.”

Brer Rabbit been wearin' a round-about ever since.

Chillen, it's mighty bad when yo' own good advice turn 'ginst you.

II

WHY MISTER FROG IS STILL A BACHELOR

MISTER FROG, he been long time 'lowing to hisse'f dat he oughter study 'bout gittin' ma'yed. Evenin's mighty long and lonesome settin' on er slippery log croakin' 'long wid de rest er de ole rusty-backed bachelers like him.

D'rectly he 'gun to speak his min' 'bout hit, he 'low:

“Oh, it's wrong
Put 't off,
S' long!
'S wrong.”

Den all dem li'l' high-hollerin' frogs dey tuck hit on deyse'ves to give him de ansah:

“Yas, 'tis,
Yas, 'tis!
Marry Liz!
Marry Liz!”

Dey des keep up such a larment all thoo de night dat Mister Frog gits so pestered dat he

THE
GREAT
GREAT



“D’rectly he ’gun to speak his min’ ’bout hit.”

WHY MISTER FROG IS A BACHELOR

des up 'and ax de nex' critter dat come 'long to ma'y him. And he couldn't a-done no better, 'caze de next thing dat came long was a li'l' bit a brown bird des as light and lively as a Mustee gal wid Mollygloster ha'r. No sooner did Mister Frog ax dat li'l' brown bird would she ma'y him dan dat li'l' bird give him de ansah:

“Yes, I will!
Yes, I will!”

Den de Frog and de Whip-po'-will dey was engaged to be ma'yed and de whole plantation knowed it.

But Mister Frog he done got so used to bachelor ways dat he ain't in no hurry to get ma'yed, and ev'ytime Whip-po'-will ax him when is de weddin' gwine be, Mister Frog, he 'low:

“Le's put 't off,
Le's put 't off,
Till you come
From de Norf!”

Den Miss Whip-po'-will go to de Norf, whar she do stay de most portion part er de year, and soon as she come back she go to de swamp edge

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

ag'in and she ax Mister Frog when is dey gwine to set de weddin' day.

Same thing ag'in from Mister Frog:

“Le's put 't off!
Le's put 't off!”

Den Miss Whip-po'-will ax: “How long is you gwine to put off dis weddin' day?”

Den Mister Frog he give her de ansah:

“Ten! Ten! Ten!”

He don't say whe'er it ten years, or ten mont's, or ten weeks, or ten minutes, or what!

Den Miss Whip-po'-will she git mad and she 'fuse Mister Frog and she 'buse Mister Frog and she say she lucky to lose Mister Frog.

Mister Frog he no sooner see she mad and gone dan he so sorry he done got missed er ma'yin' dat nice li'l' bit a brown bird. He sorry twel yit. Ev'y spring er de year you can hear him hollerin' over behime dem dark pines:

“Oh, I wish
Dat I had!
Oh, I wish
Dat I had!”

WHY MISTER FROG IS A BACHELOR

Whip-po'-will she flit her wing and go up
higher out de swamp edge and she sing back at
him:

“Well, you could,
But you wouldn't!
Well, you could,
But you wouldn't!”

Dey talkin' dat way now over behime dem
dark pines:

“Oh, I wish dat I had!
Oh, I wish dat I had!”

And Whip-po'-will same way ansah now:

“You could—
But you wouldn't!”

Chillen, when you has a good thing in yo' hand
don't let no anxious mind make you turn a loose
of it.

III

MISS WOODPECKER'S BONNET

LONG days pas', de ole folks say dat Peter was gwine thoo de lan' janglin' his keys in his hand, when he got mighty hongry. He 'low he'll go no furderer twel he git li'l' bite of somethin' to eat.

He stop at a li'l' bit house in de far woods, and he knock on de do', and knock on de do'.

Nobody don't say: "Come in!" Nobody don't open de do'.

Peter he knock ag'in, he knock ag'in.

Nobody don't come, nobody don't say: "Come!"

D'rectly Peter, yit knockin', see a li'l' bit 'oman peepin' out at him thoo de cat-hole er de do'. She down on de floor peepin' out.

Peter say he want li'l' bit er bread.

Li'l' 'oman pull de latch, don't say: "Come!" but she drop li'l' bit dough on de skillit and set de skillit on de fire. She say: "I wants a bonnet

MISS WOODPECKER'S BONNET

to wear on de New Day er spring-time. I wants to look prim and prime." Dar she set makin' a li'l' red bonnet.

Peter, so hungry, knock on de do', ax: "Is de bread done yit?"

De li'l' ole 'oman set and make and trim and give Peter no answer, and don't ax him in.

Peter knock and wait; git no answer, git no bread.

D'rectly sech a smoke riz, and sech a smell. Bread done burn all up.

Peter yit outside, yit hongry.

Li'l' 'oman she peepin' at herse'f, turn her head dis-a-way, turn her head dat-a-way, try to see herse'f in her new red bonnet.

Peter done wait so long, done got no bread. Peter's bread all burn up. Peter call dat li'l' bit 'oman, tell her to come out by de cat-hole. 'Tell her 'caze she won't heed de stranger knockin' she gotter knock all de time; tell her she won't ax de stranger *in* she gotter stay *out* all de time; no mo' house, but a holler tree; say she so proud er her li'l' red bonnet she gotter wear li'l' red bonnet all de time.

Dat she do.

Li'l' 'oman she slip out de cat-hole, she flew

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

to de holler tree. She turn to a woodpecker, she do. Des like Peter say dat she do. She's tap-tap-tappin' all de time, she al'a's wearin' li'l' red bonnet, all time turn her head dis-a-way, turn her head dat-a-way, all time tap-tap-tappin'. 'Caze she let Peter's bread burn, she don't eat bread no mo', but des worms.

Dat's Miss Woodpecker, too proud er her new spring bonnet.

Chillen, hit's good to be proud but not too proud.

IV

BRER LIZARD'S STRENGTH AND WEALTH

B RER LIZARD sho is a rich man. But de richer he grow de mo' manners he show. Right now ef in walkin' out you meet up wid a lizard in de big road fust thing he gwine do is to bow low. Den ef you stop and say to him:

“Lizard, Lizard,
Bee and Honey!
Can't you show us folks
Yo' money?”

Brer Lizard stop right dar in de big road and poke out dat red purs' dat he tote at his throat and to let folks see his money purs'. He's de onlies' varmint what totes a money purs', least-ways he de onlies' one dat'll let you see it, if so be dey does tote one.

Mister Lizard he a mon'sus polite man. He ain't much of a laughin' man, he got too much money ter be gigglin' round wid prank-playing critters. But his cousin, Ground Lizard, he can

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

set folks to laughin'; he can set folks and critters laughin' also. Ef a Lizard bites a pusson dat pusson gwine be a giggler twel he die; al'a's gigglin' and laughin' and don't know what he gigglin' and laughin' 'bout.

Dar is some er de Lizard fambly looks rough and rusty, dough dey is got rich kin. Folks call 'em sometimes Rusty-Mollets, and some folks call 'em Rusty-Back Jeems. But dese li'l' rich fellers of de Lizard fambly de sort dat is always sleek and fine dressed, cloze er changin' colors, folks calls dem Blue Boys. Dey wears a red handkercher round dey necks long with dat red money-purs'.

Whar dey git a red handkercher? Dat's hit now. I gwine tell you 'bout dat some y'o'her day—may be.

Rich as dey is now, dey was all po' onct and picked up dey livin' best dey could. De way dey start up in de world was dis-a-way.

Snake baked a hoe-cake. He set de Frog to mind it. De Frog he drap a noddin' and de Lizard come and stole it. When Snake come home he found his hoe-cake gone; and he 'bout know who stole it, and he 'gin ter holler, he did:

LIZARD'S STRENGTH AND WEALTH

“Bring back my hoe-cake,
You long-tail Nanny,
Bring back my hoe-cake,
I got it fum my Granny.”

Lizard he never paid no retention. Des go 'long wid dat hoe-cake. Hit take dese sleek ones to steal and git de good er dey stealin'.

Dat was de start of de Lizard fambly gettin' rich.

Dat was de start of de Snake fambly gettin' po' and stayin' so.

But yet Brer Lizard don't ac' proud; ev'ybody dat speak wid Mister Lizard gits a bow from him. Sometimes he des go 'long, and bow low anyhow. Folks say he gits his strength dat-a-way—bow low to de earth and so he git strength and longer length er life.

I dunno 'bout dat, but I does know dey got dey start er wealth by stealin' dat hoe-cake, 'caze far or nigh, all over dis heah plantation, and de next, folks tell how Mister Snake yit holler at Mister Lizard:

“Bring back my hoe-cake,
You long-tail Nanny,
Bring back my hoe-cake,
I got it fum my Granny.”

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

Hoe-cake ain't much to git rich on? May be it ain't but den it's a livin'.

Chillen, when you git yo' livin', 'tain't s' much work den to git rich.

V

MISS RABBIT'S WEDDING DRESS

MISTER RABBIT he been tellin' his ole 'oman fer de longes' dat ef de crap be good he gwine to git her a lawn swiss, lily-white weddin' dress. He gwine to git her a pa'r licenses, veil and trail, white cotton gloves also same as rich, big niggers is bu'y'd in. He gwine have her bake a weddin' cake fer to have a sho' 'nough stomped down weddin' supper.

Come gadderin' time Mister Rabbit see he done made a rale good crap. He say he know dat de 'vancin' man can't take all dat crap, fer he say he do 'clar de whole endurin' year he ain't take up s'much as one crocus sack er pervigils.

Miss Rabbit she say yas she sho do know dat her'n' de chillen done been on half rations and raggity all de year.

Mister Rabbit he hitch up de double team, he do, fine yoke er steers dat Miss Rabbit done fotch up right round de do', and he start to town wid de whole year's crap, bag and bale.

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

When he done drive so far as to de top er de gravel hill, he turn round, shake his hand good-bye to Miss Rabbit, tell her she nummine, she des look out now fer him to git back and bring her dat weddin' dress, veil and trail, pa'r licenses.

No sooner Mister Rabbit he good gone dan Miss Rabbit she up and sont de six' from de baby chile 'crost Quarters fer to tell her old feller servant friend, Miss Owl, fer to comie over to her house fer to comb, grease and fresh wrop her ha'r fer her.

Miss Rabbit she done a' ready put coals on de skillet lid fer to bake dat weddin' cake.

'Twa'n't no long time befo' de smell er dat cake got round de plantation and also de news dat Miss Rabbit gwine to have a rale stomped down weddin', weddin' cake, weddin' dress, trail and veil, pa'r licenses, and gloves.

Ev'ybody drap in to pass de howdys and to talk 'bout de ole times. De cabin flo' done scrubbed, de hea'th done redded wid smashed up brick dust 'solved in milk, cedar boughs dipped in flour was stuck round de top er de walls inside, taller candles des ready fer to light was in two bottles on de fire-boa'd. De chillen all settin' round like Sunday, all got dey heads combed,



"Her next but three ol'es' boy."

MISS RABBIT'S WEDDING DRESS

greased and fresh wropped. Dey all set and wait.

Sun 'bout to go down. Miss Rabbit and dem done wait s' long fer Mister Rabbit to git home from de town dat Miss Owl she git in a gre't flutter wid waitin'. Miss Rabbit she sent her next but three ol'es' boy up de road a piece. She tell him look do he see his daddy comin', she tell him put his year down to de ground hear do he hear his daddy comin'.

D'rectly de boy come runnin' back, tell his mammy yas he see he daddy comin'. Say de steers gone, de waggin gone, de cotton gone. Des daddy come a-walkin' and a-wobblin' down de big road wid a jug a-swingin' on his back. Lawsy-massy-me!

Miss Owl, when she hear dat, she put up her hand and laugh behime it. Miss Rabbit went out de do', she did, she put her foot in de road, she did, her headhandkercher wavin' out behime arguin' wid de breeze as she go. When she retch Mister Rabbit comin' she ax him whar dat weddin' dress, veil and trail.

Mister Rabbit he clap his hands toge'her best he could; he say dat he 'clar' to goodness ef dat weddin' dress, veil and trail ain't done clean slip

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

his 'membrance! He 'low dat now how de 'vancin' man done des bodaciously tuck his whole crap, bag and bale. Done left him not s'much as a cl'ar dollar off de whole year's crap. De steers done runned away and fell in de creek, de one done broke his neck and de y'o'her done got drownded, de waggin so bad broke up hit done left at de shop to be mend.

Miss Rabbit she don't say no word. She got no word to say.

When she git to de house do' dar she see Miss Owl standin' wid her knittin' roll up ready fer startin' 'crost Quarters. She ax Miss Rabbit what time and hour shall she come back fer de weddin' and de weddin' supper.

Miss Rabbit say she is des done notice dat dar is a sad streak in de cake dat she is done bake, and she say she don't and she won't ax no comp'ny to her house fer to eat sad cake.

Miss Owl she click her knittin' needles toge'her and she laugh behime her hand ag'in, den off she go 'crost Quarters. She know dar won't be no weddin' in dat house dat night.

Chillen, Mister Rabbit he know, like de rest of de old folks, dat de knot dat you tie wid yo' tongue you can't easy untie wid yo' teef.

VI

WITCH BLUEBIRD

LONG in de fust time thar was a plantation whar folks was pestered nigh 'bout to death bein' rid by de witches. In nigh 'bout ev'y cabin in de Quarter somebody was rid ev'y night by de witches. Ev'ybody on de plantation knowed dat somebody on dat plantation sho was gittin' outer dey skin and becomin' into a witch to ride folks of nights. But dat was hit—who?

One night nigh 'bout ev'y cabin got fixed fer ter cotch dat witch. One 'oman she hung er ha'r-sifter over de lintel of de do', and whatever witch come in dat cabin gotter count all de holes in dat sifter 'fo' he cross de do'. 'Nother 'oman she put a cup of mustard seed on de threshold er her do', and dat witch gotter count all dem mustard seed 'fo' he cross de threshold of dat do'. 'Nother 'oman she cross cotton cards over de bed-head. Dat witch gotter count ev'y toof in dem cotton cards 'fo' he kin ride her. 'Nother

one she spread cotton seed thick over and under de bed. Ev'y one dem cotton seed gotter be count 'fo' de witch can come in dat do'.

De 'oman livin' in de end cabin in de Quarter, she didn't tell nobody what she gwine do.

'Way turn er de night de man in dat Quarter what was de witch-man he got up, he rub the right hand over de left wrist, and over de left elbow, and over de left shoulder-j'int. He rub de left hand over de right wrist, de right elbow and de right shoulder j'int. He rub bof de hands over all de rest of his j'int, as he rub, he say:

"Ouch—oo!
Ouch—oo!"

And, as he say dat, he slip *out* er his skin, he lef' his skin behime and start in and thoo de Quarter to see who he can fin' to ride, and to pester all ways.

He come to de do' whar de sifter hung. He won't stay dar. De nex' do' dar was de mustard seed. He won't stay dar. De nex' house he went in, dar de cotton cards 'crost above de bed-head. He can't ride nobody in dat bed.

He got to all de cabins and some'in' stop him ev'y time twel he come to de las' cabin in de

WITCH BLUEBIRD

Quarter. He don't see nothin' dar. Dat time he worried out. He mos' too tired to ride and pester people.

He see a gre't big splint-bottom rockin'-cheer wid a nine-patch cushion on it. He so tired he 'low he'll drap in dat cheer fer ter rest a spell 'fo' he 'gin to play his pranks, tyin' stirrups in folks' h'ar and sech. He drap in de cheer and he 'low:

"Ouch—oo! Ouch—oo!
Tired, too! Tired, too!"

Dar! Chillen, li'l' mo'n dat man'd been settin' dar twel yit.

Dat 'oman in dat las' cabin in de Quarter she knowed all de *Conjure* and de *Hands*, she did. She done stuck a three-prong fork up under dat cheer. A witch can't move ef he happen to set down in a cheer dat has got a three-prong fork stuck in it.

All night dat ole witch-man set dar in dat cheer des as still. He look dis way. He look dat way, des like you see a bluebird turnin' and lookin' on a limb.

When fust day come, dat 'oman 'gun to stir,

she did. Soon as she open her eyes she look toward dat cheer.

Dar in dat cheer, top er dat nine-patch cushion, sat dat witch man. Dar he sat. Shoulders all hunched up, he look rale ashy in de daylight. He so skeered up he look right rale blue. His shirt stickin' thoo de rags in his cloze look like white patches on him.

Dat 'oman she riz up in bed, she 'low: "Who you?"

Dat ole witch-man he git mo' blue and ashy; he hunch up his shoulders, he 'low:

"Well, I mus' go!

(Des so.)

Well, I mus' go!

(Des so.)"

But, chillen, he couldn't go long as dat three-prong fork stuck in dat cheer.

Dat 'oman say, witch-like as he is outer his natchel skin, she done cotch de feature of him and she know who he is.

He des sot dar. His shoulders hunch up. He look blue and ashy in de day-light, he kep' sayin':

"Well, I mus' go!

(Des so.)

Well, I mus' go!

(Des so.)"

WITCH BLUEBIRD

Dat 'oman she got up and slipped round behime dat cheer and snatched out de three-prong fork. Den out de cheer he flew, hollerin':

“Ouch—oo! Ouch—oo!
Out, too! Out, too!”

He dart out. He skim out, blue and ashy, dem white patches des shinin' in de fust daylight.

De 'oman she run to de do'. She say to de nex' one passin': “Did you see dat witch-man fly outer my do'?”

Passerby say: “Naw, I des seed a bluebird fly out.”

Nex' day late long 'bout sun up de Quarter folks went to dat ole man's cabin, him which make hisse'f a witch-man, and dar lay de skin what de witch-man done wriggled outer night befo'. Hit was limp and black and shiny. Dat three-prong fork done held dat man twel daylight and so he couldn't git back time 'nough to jump into his own skin no mo'.

Folks on dat plantation don't put no trus' in bluebirds twel yit. Dat distrustus min' 'bout bluebirds done spread thoo all de plantations.

Folks say sence den dat eärly morning when dat witch-man got cotch in dat cheer, him and

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

all his folks is turned to bluebirds. De boys is bluer dan de gals. Dey say all bluebirds is witch-birds. Hit's worst sorter luck to kill one, er harm one; nobody don't never think er eating a bluebird.

Chillen, hit's mighty bad to be projectin' roun' nights outen yo' bed, let 'lone outen yo' skin.

VII

CRAFTY MISTER MAN OUTWITS BRER B'AR AND CUFFEY

BARS useter be thick in dese woods in de ole times. Ev'ybody went 'round wid a gun or a knife 'counter dey mought come 'crost Brer B'ar.

One day hit happen dat Mister Man went a piece behime dem dark pines widout no knife, widout no gun. Dat ve'y day he met up wid Brer B'ar. He come upon Brer B'ar so sudden dar wa'n't no way to run, nor hide, nor climb a tree, nor do nothin'.

Brer B'ar, he des flinchin' in his skin, des trimblin' to git his fo'legs round Mister Man and hug him to death.

Mister Man, he study what can he do to keep Brer 'B'ar from gittin' a good holt on him, 'caze he know ef Brer B'ar onct git a holt to hug him dar ain't gwine be no room fer hope in de heart.

Brer B'ar raisin' up on his haunches and reachin' fer Mister Man. Mister Man 'low he try some 'ceivin' talk, he say: "Brer B'ar, hit

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

bo' in on me as my las' day is nighin', but I won't wa'se time cryin', ev'y critter have his day when he 'bleeged to go 'way, but ef I gotter go I des ax you let me go friends wid you. Lemme shake yo' hand same as you was a feller-man."

Dat pleased Brer B'ar, and he know he got Mister Man so good trapped dat he don't keer ef he do humor him one time.

Brer B'ar he hand out his paw to Mister Man. Mister Man he shake and he shake dat paw. He say: "Ev'y time befo' dis, Brer B'ar, when I is met up wid you, I been hampered up in one hand wid er gun. Now I free handed, lemme shake you by bof hands as man to man."

Brer B'ar so tickled dat Mister Man treat him like his ekal dat he retch out t'o'her paw. Mister Man take dat paw also. Mister B'ar he stand on his behime legs, he feel des as weak as a stream er water tryin' to run up hill.

Dar. Dem two'd been standin' dar yit, ef Cuffey hadn't a-come 'long.

Cuffey say: "Hi! What dis I see?"

Mister Man say: "Mister B'ar's tellin' me how to ketch a fat possum 'dout huntin' him, and whar he keeps his best bee-trees."

Cuffey say: "Hi! I wisht he'd tell me."

CRAFTY MISTER MAN

He stand dar grinnin', Cuffey do, and lookin' mighty wishful, his mouf des waterin' fer dat possum and dat heap er honey.

Mister Man say: "Well, Cuffey, come 'long, you can hear de end of de song."

Cuffey, he come up scrapin' and bowin': "Thanky, Massa, thanky!"

Mister Man put Brer B'ar's paws in Cuffey's two hands.

Cuffey took a holt.

Mister Man say: "Keep good holt, Cuffey, you safe 'long as you keep good holt, but you is a gone nigger ef ever you turn go."

Wid dat Mister Man was off to 'tend to some business.

Cuffey's hands been full ever sence dat day.

Chillen, hit mighty wrong to try to take y'o'her folks jobs 'way from 'em. You maybe mought git holt er one you can't turn go.

VIII

WHY MISS RABBIT NEVER GOT MARRIED

DE disapp'intment of de weddin' hit riled Miss Rabbit some, but hit don't rile her like Miss Owl laughin' behime her hand done rile her. Mo'n dat, Miss Rabbit, she see time's passin' and she gittin' ol'er day by day. Nex' year when pitchin'-crap time come she 'low to Mister Rabbit dat she b'lieve she'll run a outside patch.

Mister Rabbit, he say he don't keer ef she do so. He say he many a time is seen a half-acre outside patch look like hit made 'bout six or seven bales when de forty-acre rent land in de same fambly look like hit don't bring 'nough to square off de rent, let 'lone de 'vancin'.

So Miss Rabbit pitch her crap.

She 'gree wid Mister Rabbit dat she'll work in and thoo wid him. He put de team in her patch to plow, and her'n' her squad of chillen dey do de hoein' fer bof craps, him 'n' hers.

Ev'y day, way 'fo' sun-up, her 'n' her squad

MISS RABBIT NEVER GOT MARRIED

was in de fiel'. She tie de baby-rabbit up in her homespun apron, swing hit 'crost her back by de apron strings. De ol'es' gal she tote de bed quilt fer to spread in de fence cornders fer to lay de baby on whilst all de hands hoein'. Ol'es' boy tote de bag er 'taters fer to roas' in de fiel' fire fer dey dinner. Nex' ol'es', and de nex' and de nex' and de rest take turn and time about totin' de jug er butter-milk. Ev'y one tote a hoe. Dey work dat yeah! Dey whipped old Gen'al Green-Grass clean outer dat fiel' dat yeah.

Mister Rabbit he see de crap's gwine on s' good, he ax Miss Rabbit why'n she take up at de cross-roads sto' some on dat crap.

Miss Rabbit 'low she won't, and she helt out and she don't.

She tell de chillen secret; all dem hoein' 'long in a bret, she in de lead, she tell 'em don't tell nobody, and dey done holp her so fait'ful in de patch she gwine buy ev'y li'l' gal a head handkercher and she gwine buy ev'y li'l' boy a new pocket-handkercher fer to wear and tote on Sundays and at hangin's.

Dem chillen er Miss Rabbit's dey work, dey did.

When pickin' and ginnin' time come Miss

Rabbit she had er bale, she did, a five hund'ard full bale. Dat was a clear bale, too. Dar warn't a dollar debt on hit.

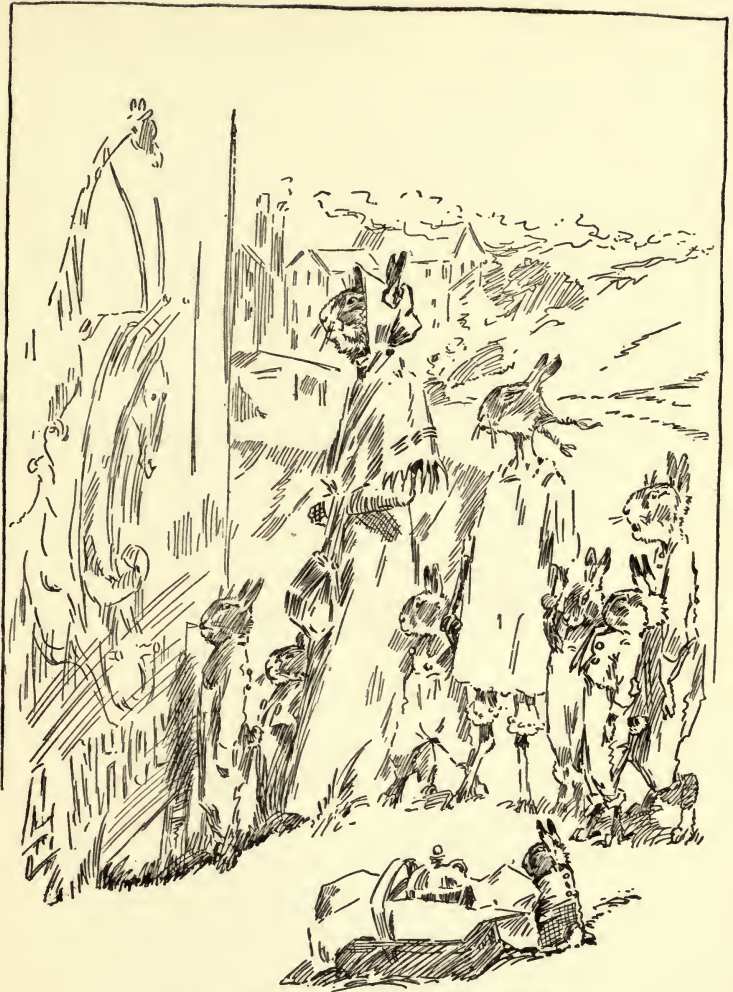
Miss Rabbit and de chillen dey sot round dat bale, dey did. Dey so 'fraid somebody gwine pester and projec' wid dat bale. Dey watch de seed-cotton go in de gin; dey watch de lint cotton fall in de pick-room. Dey watch de screw go up, de press go down, de bale come out. Miss Rabbit she gin up de seed fer de ginnin', de baggin' 'n' ties.

Dar now. Not a dollar debt on dat bale. Dat was about de onlies' clear bale ever ginned in dat neck er woods.

Den Miss Rabbit and all her chillen dey all went to town to spen' dat bale. Mister Rabbit he don't go wid 'em! Chillen, I spec' dey don't keer ef dey do slip off from Mister Rabbit dat time.

When dey git to town, cotton was gwine dat day at five two-eighths. Miss Rabbit she got her mole-skin bag clear full of money. She do like she say she gwine do. She buyed ev'y rabbit what she say she gwine buy 'em. Den 'clar' ter goodness ef she didn't make right fer de co't-house.

THE
TWO
RABBIT
STORIES



"Dey all went to town to spen' dat bale."

TO THE
ALBANY

MISS RABBIT NEVER GOT MARRIED

She buyed a pa'r licenses, she did. Den she laid in a white lawn swiss dress, a veil and trail and gloves. Dar was some pocket change lef' and she buyed her ole man a palemeter fan and a rale white man's segar. She buyed 'nother se-gar. She say dat fer Preacher Crow.

Den her 'n' de li'l' rabbits start fer home. Dey go by de cross-roads sto'. Dey call Mister Rabbit whar he loungin' on de counter dar. Dey tell him, ev'ything ready fer de weddin' now. Dey tell him be sure to git home soon.

Mister Rabbit say he 'clar' to goodness he gwine git home by good sun-down, let 'lone befo' hit be good dark.

When dey git home, all hands set to work. Dey scrub de flo', dey bake a cake, and dat cake didn't have no sad streak dis time. Dey scrape off de bread boa'd and go to cookin' Johnny cakes on dem boards. Miss Rabbit she sont ag'in 'crost Quarters fer Miss Owl to come. She sont de ansah fer her to come 'n' comb 'n' grease 'n' fresh wrop her ha'r fer her.

'Bout moon-rise Preacher Crow come, he got his book under his arm. Folks drap in to pass de howdys. Sis Owl settin' wid her chin in her hand. De li'l' rabbits all settin' round. Li'l' gals

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

got on dey new head handkerchers. Li'l' boys dey got dey new handkerchers in dey pockets, ends stickin' out, and t'want no Sunday nor hangin' neither.

Preacher Crow he gittin' flustered wid waitin' so long. De pa'r licenses on de table.

Heah Miss Fox come down de neighbor path. She done wait fer good dark fer to come to borry a meal's meat er pervigils. She see so much company settin' round she hide her gourd and medjurin' cup under her apron. She 'low: "La, Miss Rabbit settin' dar veil 'n' trail!" She 'low: "What y' all gwine do?"

Preacher Crow 'low: "Us gwine have a weddin'."

Miss Fox, she 'low: "Den what y' all waitin' on?"

Preacher Crow 'low: "Des waitin' on de bridegroom. Des waitin' on Brer Rabbit."

Miss Fox, she 'low: "You wait some long time den."

She 'low: "Him 'n' my ole man done gone down to Chick-a-sy-bogue swamp wid a big jug twixt 'em, pa'r fishin' poles, 'n' can er bait.

"Dey say dey gwine stay fishin' till daylight fer de suckers what won't bite 'cept at night."

MISS RABBIT NEVER GOT MARRIED

Lawsy-massy-me!

Miss Rabbit she helt up her chin de bes' she could. Den she fling up her hands, toss up her veil. She got on de gloves, too. She 'low: "Dat is de truf!"

She 'low: "She dunno how come she clean fergit to speak to Mister Rabbit 'bout this heah weddin'. She do declar' ef she ain't so sorry 'bout she fergit dat." But Miss Rabbit she didn't have no heart to cut dat weddin' cake. Sis Owl she cut hit. She gin all de chillen some.

Preacher Crow he took off a good sized piece in his saddle-bags. He went off smokin' a segar, Preacher Crow did. He look mighty anxious at dat y'o'her segar.

But Miss Rabbit she make like she don't notice. She keep dat y'o'her segar fer her ole man when he do git home. De p'ar licenses? La! Dey is twixt two clap-boards now in de bottom of Miss Rabbit's cloze-chist.

Chillen, hope and hope and keep hopin', but don't let hope cost you no cash.

IX

WHY BRER BUZZARD LIKES THE OLD WAY BEST

LONG time Cap'n Sparrer and his folks been raisin' 'taters on a hill-top patch.

Dem Sparrers made de greatest 'miration 'bout dat crap er 'taters. Dey say dat patch er pervidins is de 'cassion er dey bein' so rich, dough dey be so small. Hit's de livin' dat dey git outer dat crap dat make 'em liable to be rich 'nough to hire folks to do work fer 'em.

Ev'y spring dey hire Brer Jay and hitch him to dey plow, and ev'y fall dey hire Brer Bluebird fer to be dey watchman whilst dey steal Mister Man's corn.

Dat hill-top patch of de Sparrer fambly, hit lie right in Brer Buzzard's range. Ev'y year by year he look down on dat hill patch and see dem Sparrers workin' and diggin' and scratchin' on dat hill. A many a day Brer Buzzard he laugh at dem li'l' birds workin' so hard. But one day he circulatin' round 'bout he study 'bout hit must be mighty good to git a livin' out de ground.

BUZZARD LIKES THE OLD WAY BEST

Brer Buzzard he know ef anybody kill him he got de State to pay fer dat killin', but den he know also dat no man don't git fat off his own life insu'ance money. He know all dat die is his claim good and well, but when dey is gwine die and whar he can't tell.

He look down on dat li'l' hill-top patch; he say to hisse'f he'll claim it and he'll name it for hisse'f. Wid dat, he clap his wings toge'her like a thunder clap and drap 'mongst dem sparrers.

Sech a flutterin' and chatterin' and a hollerin' 'mongst dem Sparrers when Brer Buzzard lit 'midst 'em. When Brer Buzzard claim dat patch and name it his'n, sech a chatterin' as dem Sparrers set up.

"Hit's mine! Hit's mine!
Mine! Mine! Mine!
My Granddaddy lef' it.
Mine! Mine!"

Den dey set tellin' how sence ev'y season dey granddaddy raise 'taters in dat patch and raise 'em:

"Big! Big! Big!
So big!"

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

Dat's de very word to suit Brer Buzzard, he want some'in' *big*. Dat word make him want dat hill-top patch de mo'. He croak out to dem Sparrers:

“How big? How?
How big? How?”

Dem Sparrers chattered him back de ansah:

“Big! Big! Big!
Big as my leg is!”

Brer Buzzard he look at dem sparrers. Nairy one a moufful fer Brer Buzzard. He croak out:

“How big! How?
How big? How?”

Dat Cap'n Sparrer, he ansah back:

“Big! Big! Big!
Big as my leg is!”

Brer Buzzard he croak out:

“Cap'n Sparrer, ĩ beg,
Lemme see yo' leg!”

Cap'n Sparrer he stick out his leg, no bigger dan a straw, he say:

BUZZARD LIKES THE OLD WAY BEST

“Big! Big! Big!
Big as my leg is!”

Brer Buzzard he croak out:

“O, ho!
Dat be de case
I'll eat car'ion
De res' er my days—
O, ho!”

And Brer Buzzard he do.

Chillen, don't be too quick to seek attar new
things, for de ole ways is best.

X

WHY BRER POSSUM'S TAIL IS BARE

IN de fust times Brer Possum's tail was as bushy as Fox's or Squirrel's, and Brer Possum was sho' proud of dat bushy tail. But now folks got a song 'bout him, and it go sorter so:

“Do Squirrel have a bushy tail,
And stump-tail am de Har’;
De Raccoon’s tail am singed all round
But de Possum’s tail am bar’.”

De way his tail got bar’ was dis-a-way.

One day Brer Possum was gwine 'long de big road, shufflin' long, draggin' his foots like a country nigger, when he see Brer Buzzard gwine on des befo'. Brer Buzzard lif' up his wings to hop over a ditch 'crost de big road.

Brer Buzzard he a mighty bar'-legged, bar'-footed critter and Brer Possum he snicker behime his hand at Brer Buzzard's bar' legs and foots.

WHY BRER POSSUM'S TAIL IS BARE

Brer Buzzard he hear some 'in' gwine on behime; he look back quick and catch Brer Possum snickerin'. Brer Buzzard, he say:

“Um—hum! Oho!
You gigglin', Oho!”

Brer Possum, he ain't sorry he laugh, but he sorry he caught at it, he up and say:

“I bound to laugh
Des a grin and a half.”

Brer Buzzard know Brer Possum laugh at dem bar' legs and foots er his'n but he make like he dunno, dough he study right den how he gwine git even wid Brer Possum. He don't go over de ditch, but he come steppin' back and pass de howdys wid Brer Possum and dey two set on de road-side ter talk.

Brer Buzzard he ax Brer Possum fust thing how come he so feared of fire.

Brer Possum he a timid man to de heart and he don't want ter talk 'bout being skeery. He say:

“Who say I feared er fire?
Dat man's a sho' liar.”

Brer Buzzard he say: “I glad ter hear you say dat, Brer Possum, 'caze folks is telling a many

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

a tale over yonder behime dem dark pines 'bout you feared er fire. I gwine prove you ain't, and den I gwine tell dem folks dat you sho ain't de man what's feared er fire."

Brer Possum feared right den, his teef des chatterin' in his head, he say:

"No need to *prove* it, man,
But *tell* 'em you can."

Brer Buzzard he say:

"No, no, ole man, oh,
We'll prove it—des so."

Wid dat Brer Buzzard he go to de ditch, he lay two li'l' poles 'crost de ditch, he lay on some pine twigs and pine cones and build him a fire.

Brer Possum he settin' on de road-side so skeered he can't open his eyes, des set grinnin', and tremblin'.

'Time Brer Buzzard got dat fire cracklin' and blazin', he say:

"De man dat pass under fire, oh—
Ain't feared er fire no mo',
And nobody need sesso."

Brer Possum he snatch at des a chance, he study ef Brer Buzzard go under fust and git

THE
SOUTH
WEST



"Dem poles done burnt in two."

WHY BRER POSSUM'S TAIL IS BARE

burnt to ashes and dust he won't hatter foller—
save bof his change and his dollar. He say:

“Brer Buzzard, go fust,
You right raly must.”

Brer Buzzard see Brer Possum trimblin', his
eyes shet up tight, he so feared he skeered even
to *look* at de fire, 'let 'lone go under de fire. Brer
Buzzard say:

“Heah I go *under* de flame,
You gotter do de same!”

Wid dat Brer Buzzard give his wings er flop
and dar he go *over* de fire. 'Crost y'o'her side
he holler back at Brer Possum:

“Possum, yo' turn
Now while it burn!”

Dar Possum open his eyes, see Brer Buzzard
'crost de fire, sho 'nough, and don't know how
he got dar.

Brer Buzzard holler:

“Come on now,
You 'clar and vow,
You wa'n't feared er fire——”

Brer Possum know he gotter go else have de
whole settlement down on him fer a skeery man

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

feared er fire, so he shamble up, grit his teef, tuck his head down and start *under* the fire. Des as he got most under, dem pine poles done burnt in two, down dey drap, and let all de fire right on Brer Possum's bushy tail.

Dar. Dat tail er Brer Possum's been bar' ever sence.

Chillen, don't laugh at y'o'her folks' troubles, 'caze you don't know when de same gwine fall on you.

XI

A MOSS-BACK SINNER IN EVERY MEETING HOUSE

FOLKS 'bleeged to 'new up dey 'ligion in de spring. Dey kin make 'rangements wid de 'vancin'-man fust er de year, and git up rent-notes and crap-liens; but when hit come to dealin' wid de earth and de Lord, dey gotter wait twel de spring open up.

Des as soon as de plum bushes 'gin to whiten up wid buds, den all de wile birds git toge'her and 'way behime dem dark pines dey holds dey Wilderness Feas'. Sech a groanin' and a moanin' and a hymn-chune singin' as dey has den. Ev'y bird gits on prayin' ground and pleadin' terms.

Blackbirds come fust, flocks of 'em, all de connections and kinnery of 'em. Dey settle in de cane-brake, 'bout de thick woods, and hit go wid 'em like de ole-time song:

“Said the Blackbird to de Crow:
‘What makes de white man hate us so?
Ever sence ole Adam was born
Hit’s been our trade to pick up corn.’”

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

Sech a chatterin' 'mongst dem Blackbirds, hit wos'n a whole plantation under 'viction er sin at one time. Well, de corn ain't sprout yit—hit easy des now to say dey won't pick up corn—now—but wait twil it do sprout.

Bull-frog he ain't no church-member, but he 'vise dem dat is how dey ought do, so he bass de Blackbirds' ballet wid:

“Don't go
Do it no mo'!
Don't go
Do it no mo'!”

Time de Blackbirds done tellin' dey 'sperience and 'pentence, heah come de Blue Dartin'-Hawk:

“If I thought hit is or has been
Fer me or any my kin
To count stealin' chickens a sin,
I'd never steal a chicken ag'in!”

Off he dart, 'caze heah come de Crows in a crowd, and Brer Hawk he feared of a passel of Crows same as de deacon is feared of de camp'een of preachers 'lessen he done save 'em some and most er de 'lection money.

When de Crows 'gin to settle round des as solemn, de li'l' Frogs set up hollerin':

A MOSS-BACK SINNER

“You late!
You late!
Whar’s Kate?
Whar’s Kate?”

Den de sec’et was out. Dough Brer Crow a preacher now, he mought’s well confess wid de res’, ’caze all de settlement know hit’s his common cry when corn and goobers sprout:

“Oh, you Katie,
Le’s dig goobers!
Oh, you Katie,
Le’s dig goobers!”

Preacher Crow he make de bes’ out wid de tale dat he can. He say, even to a preacher is des a human-beam, and bound sometimes to make a wrong gleam.

De ’members satisfied wid dat, fer dey don’t any of ’em know when dey gwine step aside dey-se’ves out er de narrer path.

Brer Frog he is al’a’s to remain des a rank sinner, and like a sho ’nough sinner he croak out to de strivers in ’ligion:

“Ef all do wrong,
I won’t belong!
Ef all do wrong,
I won’t belong!”

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

Den heah to de wile woods come even Jedge Peacock. Dat's de time him and his hen goes on long 'scussions, and yo' Ma has all de plantation huntin' 'em, can't fin' 'em twel day gits ready to come back. He's de Jedge now, yet ev'ybody know how when he was young he try to break into Mister Crawfish's bank. So he holler dat he also done wrong:

“When he's a boy
Pea-hoy! Pea-hoy!”

De Mockin' Bird leaves de Gre't House yard to come to de Wilderness Feas' to tell how he stole de fust grain er corn.

Den Bull-frog he's at it ag'in:

“You stole!
You stole!”

Dat's de way dem birds have dey Wilderness Feas' ev'y year.

When you see 'em ag'in dey light widin' and shinin' widout like rale church members 'vived up. Dey say, des let Mister Frog 'lone; let him say what he please 'caze he is des a rank wrong-doer. Dey don't mind ef he don't jine. Dar's

A MOSS-BACK SINNER

al'a's a moss-back sinner on de back seat of ev'y member's meetin'. And dey gwine tell de worse you done on you.

Chillen, hit better ter tell on yo'se'f dan to have t'o'her folks tell on you.

XII

THE BOASTFUL FIELD WREN

ALL the high-flyers were out on de wing.
De Eagle he fly clean to de eye of de sun.

Buzzard he so free of wing dat he sail 'mongst de clouds.

Up go de Fiel' Lark! Whirl right up from de grass to de sky, twirlin' dem wings up so fas' yer scurcely could mark whar she fly. De Mock-in' Bird, Dove, Jay, Bluebird, all have mo' sense dough dan to try to reach de sky. But li'l' Brown Wren in de fence-cornder she chirp out to Mистер Wren:

"Oh, me!
I see,
You'n' me
Can retch de sky!
I spy,
You'n' I
Can tetch de sky!"



“You’n’ I
Can tetch de sky!”

THE BOASTFUL FIELD WREN

Now Wren she ain't never fly no higher dan a man's shoulder. De birds dey was clean 'stonish to hear her talk like dat. Yit she chirp to her mate:

“Let's try,
You'n' I,
To retch de sky!”

De birds was fair scandalized at sech boastin'. Wren puttin' herse'f ekal to de high-flyers. Ekal ter dem what had strengt' er wing. Ekal ter dem what 'blong high 'nough to know ev'y-thing. Ekal ter dem what al'a's went high to sing. Dem birds was sho 'stonished ter hear sech boastin'. And dar set dat li'l' bit brown bird in de corner talkin' as biggity as ef her wing could medjure sizes wid Brer Buzzard's.

Brer Buzzard he was de fust one to give de ansah to Wren's boastin'. He croak down from de top er de ole dead tree whar he set, he say:

“Haw! Haw!
'Tain't no law
'Ginst tryin'
High flyin'.”

Lark she sorter come to her voice also. She sing cl'ar frum de grass-tuft whar she done drap

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

in her 'mazement and dazement at de Wren's
boastin':

"Pride'll overfill you,
Boastin' quick to kill you!
But fly now! Fly now!"

De Dove she set on a haw-bush and git her
speech also; she coo out ter de li'l' brown boaster:

"Ef I was you,
I'd try, too;
Show what you can do,
Fly, you!"

Even de Fiel' Sparrers what fly low deyse'ves
was mad at Wren's foolish boastin' and dey set
up de greates' 'larment at Wren, chirpin' loud
dey was:

"You lie!
You lie!
But try!
Des try!"

Nothin' Wren could do now but she gotter try
whe'r she want to or no. Boastin' done put her
to strivin'. She gotter try to toe de mark she
done made fer herse'f in her talk. All de birds
was at it now, in a clatter and a cry:

THE BOASTFUL FIELD WREN

“Try! Try! Try!
Fly! Fly! Fly!
High! High! High!”

Up hop de Wren. She built fer nothin' but a li'l' hoppin', flutterin' bird. But hit happen des as she spread her wings fer to try to fly high as her boastin'—she des a bunch brown feathers—heah come a flash er wind! Dat streak er wind hit dip and slip right under dat li'l' bit bird. Dat wind flash her over de top rail er de stake and rider-fence. Hit dash her higher dan de tree tops.

La, wa'n't Wren skeered den! She open her mouf to holler, but her tongue was stiff. She s' skeered. Wind done tuck her past de Buzzard's range. Done toss her beyant de Eagle's way. She see Brer Eagle goin' by, she feared she gwine to go mo' high.

But des den de wind scoot frum under her. She 'gin to drap. De Eagle he come nigh give her a slap wid his wing. Den she drap to de Buzzard's range, and he give her a slap wid his wing. Den de Fiel' Lark he give her a lick as she come to his beat. Time she get down, des ruffled and tussled up, to de range er de Pee-Wee, de Jay, de Joree, de Redbird and de res' of 'em

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

—it was a lick and a kick fer de boaster as fās' as dey could git 'em in.

Dey drive dat li'l' bird back to de fence corner, dey did. Dey sent her whar she b'longed. She born dar, she gwine live dar. A streak er luck may fetch up de boaster awhile, but not fer long.

Chillen, de bragger and de boaster is like a balloon, sho' ter git bust some day.

XIII

SILLY SNAKE AND HIS MONEY

“Po’ as a snake,
Thin as a rake;
And, I tell you, I know
How come he so po’!”

O NCT in de ole days Mister Moccasin had des shed his skin; you know twel yit Mister Snake do shed his skin ev’y spring er de year. He was lookin’ fresh and new in dat fine spring suit, his ole cloze lyin’ by when ’long come Brer Lizard.

Brer Lizard a mons’ous perlite man, he is, he bow—des so! Twel yit you don’t pass Brer Lizard in de big road but what he give you dat bow—des so!

Mister Snake, he say:

“Mister Lizard, howdeydo!
Hit’s mighty pleasant to see you.”

Den he quoil up and ax Brer Lizard how he like his new spring suit. Brer Lizard, he say:

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

“Fust rate, nice and new,
Like 'em very well, I do!
But, Mister Snake, now, I say,
You won't fling dat ole suit away!”

Whar-pun he pint to dem close dat Mister Snake done des fling off.

Mister Lizard hisse'f he have mo' cloze dan anybody, but nobody don't know whar he do keep his trunk.

Mr. Moccasin he say he don't 'zactly know. He ax Brer Lizard do he know anybody want to buy ole cloze mos' as good as new.

Brer Lizard say he a'ready got suits of all colors, but he say he don't keer ef he do buy one mo'. He is got also a full purse of money, 'caze you see fer yo'se'f how Brer Lizard keep a red purse right under his chin. You des meet him in de big road and you ax him:

“Lizard! Lizard! Oh, la, honey!
Lizard! Lizard! Whar yo' money?”

Den you watch him, and des sho as sun shines he'll show you dat purse.

Mister Snake, he say:

“What'll you give—you—
Fer dat suit mos' good as new?”

SILLY SNAKE AND HIS MONEY

Brer Lizard he bein' sech er rich man he say bole:

"Wheat en chaff!
I'll give you seven and a half."

Mister Snake he hum and haw. Brer Lizard, like de rich man he is, he stick to his price. Mister Moccasin Snake like de po' man gotter take what he can git. He hatter des take dat. Don't he feel rich den, new suit er cloze, and seven dollars and a half fer de ole! But den like all po' folks he don't know how to keep money. He ain't got no purse like Brer Lizard is got. So fust thing he 'gun to study 'bout was how could he spend dat money and he say to hisse'f:

"What do rich folks eat, Oho?
Not des common vittles—no."

De sun was a'ready gittin' low, time mos' fer supper, so he start out, sayin' to hisse'f:

"A rich man what don't hatter beg
Mought like a fried frog-leg!"

Dar. Mister Frog, he was right in front of Mister Snake, gwine down de road to de swamp, hippity-hop! hippity-hop! Miss Owl she was set-

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

tin' on a c'ypus limb on de swamp road, and she call to Mister Snake, her 'n' him al'a's been good frien's, and is twel yit, says she:

“Whar is you gwine,
Twis'in' like a vine?”

Mr. Moccasin, he holler back, he do:

“Frog-leg fer supper—see—
Come and cook 'em good fer me!”

Mister Frog, he hearn him. O, la, honey, didn't he hop den! Yit hop all he could, Mister Snake he was gainin' on him. Mister Frog he a mighty slow man.

Miss Owl she sorter fly and flutter long, des a-keepin' dem two in sight.

So dey all go. Mister Frog he hop and he hop de bes' he can. Mister Snake he slip and slide 'long. Mister Frog his brea'f mos' gone. Mister Snake he yit gainin' on him. Mister Frog he des can make out to holler like he do twel yit holler when he bad skeered:

“Quit, quit, quit,
Quit, quit!”

Ef Mister Frog des could reach de water den he be all right.

Dey is in hearin' of de creek now. Dat water

SILLY SNAKE AND HIS MONEY

sound cole and chilly ter Mister Snake, but hit sound mighty pleasant to Mister Frog hit do.

De Frogs on de logs in de creek, and on de y'o'her side of de creek dey hear de race and dey all 'gin to holler to dey bro'her Frog:

“Wade in! Wade in!
Wade in! Wade in!”

Mister Frog he hearn 'em and hit cheered him up no li'l' bit. He hop and he hop—and den he give one brambrougous jump! And sho 'nough right in de creek he went: Blim-blam! Ker-flam!

Den all de frogs dey set up sech a 'joyment and sech a hollerin' 'bout dey bro'her done got free.

Miss Owl, she set on de creek edge and she feel sorter po'ly 'caze she done got missed of her supper of fried frogs' legs long wid Mister Snake. Mister Snake, he quoil up on de bank fer to study 'bout— What now? Well, he study 'bout he still a rich man anyhow, and so he 'gin to count his money:

One dollar! Two dollar! Three—
Much and mo' dollar—see!
I'm de man dat yit can laugh,
Fer yit I got seven and a half.”

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

Mister Frog he reach out his head out de creek, and he croak deep in his throat:

“Ten! Ten! Ten!”

Mister Frog des talkin’ his usual talk, like all de Frogs do talk when dey in de creek safe and cool:

“Ten! Ten! Ten!”

But dat make Mister Snake madder’n ever, and he holler out like Mister Frog was talkin’ to him, which he ain’t studyin’ him:

“Seven and a half!
Seven and a half!”

Miss Owl she been keepin’ school so long dat she got sense, dough her eyes is bad and she can’t see fur, so she des lean out de trees and she say:

“Ten’s mo’n’ seven and a half,
Ef ’twas dat why den I’d des laugh!”

Mister Frog, he safe and he ain’t keerin’, so he des keep up his usual:

“Ten! Ten! Ten!”

Mister Snake, he git madder’n’ madder, and he say:

SILLY SNAKE AND HIS MONEY

“Seven and a half!
Seven and a half!
Ef you don’t believe me—you!
Take and count hit yo’s’e’f, do!”

Wid dat he fling de money to whar he see
Mister Frog’s head stickin’ out de water.

Dar. He ain’t never see dat money no mo’
twel yit. Dat’s de way wid po’ folks. Dey des
flings dey money way when dey gits hit.

Chillen, when you gits hold er money, keep
hit—and don’t count hit *loud* nuther.

XIV

BRER RABBIT GOES LOOKING FOR TROUBLE

BRER RABBIT he make trouble, but he don't take trouble.

One day lot er de critters was met up toge'her in de wile woods talkin' 'bout dey troubles.

Brer Rabbit he come lopin' up. He stop wid 'em. He listen to 'em talk, he say:

“Trouble, trouble,
Double, trouble!
What is trouble?”

De beas'es all say: “Brer Rabbit, ain't you never see trouble?”

Brer Rabbit, he say: “Naw, I ain't never see trouble. How trouble look?”

Ev'y one er dem critters is done see trouble, and mos' of 'em done seed hit long er Brer Rabbit, and hit make 'em mad ter hear Brer Rabbit say he don't know nothin' 'bout trouble.

Brer Fox, he say:



"He jump in his ole 'oman's rainbarrel."

LOOKING FOR TROUBLE

“Trouble’s comin’ dis-a-way,
Trouble may git heah to-day!”

Brer Rabbit say: “Shoo! Trouble, trouble, trouble, trouble! Al’a’s talkin’ ’bout trouble. Wisht I could see trouble.”

Brer Possum, he say: “Brer Rabbit, ef you go down yonder to dat rise ’midst de sedge fiel’ you may see trouble. Trouble’s comin’ dis-a-way.”

Brer Fox, he ’low:

“Brer Rabbit, he don’t dare to go,
Don’t want to see no trouble—no.”

’Co’s e Brer Rabbit don’t want er take no dare off Brer Fox, so he hatter go. He lope off to de rise in de sedge fiel’, and dar he set on his haunches waitin’ to see trouble. He was a pretty smart grey beas’ den, up and over all plain grey not a white spot on him. He set and he watch fer trouble. He can’t leave dat rise ’midst er de sedge fiel’ ’caze all de beas’es watchin’ him.

Brer Possum gone to de Souf. Brer Elephant gone to de Eas’. Goat gone to de Wes’. Deer gone to de Norf. Buzzard hangin’ over.

D’rectly Brer Rabbit set dar so long he drap noddin’.

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

Time he go to sleep Brer Buzzard he give de word.

Ev'y one er dem critters set de sedge fiel' afire, at ev'y four cornders. Fire fly all over dat fiel' at onct. Brer Rabbit in a fiel' er fire. He wake up. Fire ev'y whar. Fire in de Eas'. Fire in de Wes'. Fire all round in a wilderness.

Brer Rabbit he jump up and down on dat rise. He don't see no way out. He holler:

“Trouble! Trouble!

I see trouble!

Trouble! Trouble!

I see trouble!”

Fire gittin' nigher. Look like all de world afire. Brer Rabbit see he gotter run thoo fire or git roasted dar. So thoo de blaze he go. Jump, kick, fight fire, run, jump! Ev'y step he holler:

“Trouble! Trouble!

I see trouble!”

He jump so high he keep his back from ketchin' fire, but his breas' and his under parts and his legs was burnt nigh a crispy done.

He run home, jump in his ole 'oman's rain-barrel. His ole 'oman hatter keep him some-

LOOKING FOR TROUBLE

time wrap up in 'lasses and flour. When he come out, he was a different lookin' man. He done seed trouble. De ha'r done come out white all de way up half of him whar he been burnt. He des 'bout half grey and half white.

Chillen, don't hunt trouble and trouble won't hunt you.

XV

HOW THE HUMMING BIRD LOST HER VOICE

ACROSS the fields between us and the belt of dark pines, the evening shadows were falling. A wind from the bay was sweeping up to us and the pines tossed wildly like the plumes of an Indian warrior, decked for the wild warfare of old, when Mammy, holding us close in her warm embrace, my little sister and me, told us the story of a lost song.

Dar is mo'n one way to los' yer voice, and yo' wit, also, ef you gwine los' it.

Some folks tell me dat de Hummin' Bird los' her voice 'long of greediness; dat her singin' git des bodaciously choked out of her wid eatin' too much honey. But de old folks useter tell me dat she los' dat song 'long er pokin' her long mouf into ev'ythin'.

You see she do dat twel yit; her and her folks, all of 'em, do dat, poke dey long bill ev'ywhar.

Dar now! Chillen, don't ev'ybody hate to see

HUMMING BIRD LOST HER VOICE

a long bill comin'? He—he! Dat's de way wid de Hummin' Bird fambly and folks—a long bill! Al'a's pokin' out a long bill!

But hit's de natchal truf dat she los' her song des teetotally long er pryin' too much on de summer wind.

Summer wind so sweet, so sweet dat Hummin' Bird study 'bout hit must come fum a gyarden whar de flowers is sweeter dan de flowers in dis heah gyarden. She study s' much 'bout how sweet dose flowers which she ain't seed must be ef dese she is seed is so sweet dat she make up her mind dat she'll foller de wind whene'r hit blows, and whare'r hit goes.

So, on a summer day she start out. Sweet Li'l' Breeze come by. Hummin' Bird she start atter hit. Breeze hit dart dis way, dat way!

Hummin' Bird, she dash dis way and she flash dat way, follerin' Li'l' Breeze.

De Li'l' Breeze don't like be follered dat way. De Hummin' Bird onlies' bird light 'nough on de wing to foller de breezes so clost. De Li'l' Breeze she study 'bout she gwine home 'caze she don't like to be pry and spy on dat way.

Whar her home?

Oh, la, chillen, dat ain't my business. I 'spec'

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

'tain't youn neither. Ef I was to go follerin' a breeze to see whar hit come fum I might los' my voice same like de Hummin' Bird.

Um-hum! Den who gwine tell you tales den?

Hummin' Bird she got *dar*, to de wind's house, but she sorry she went. Hit was rustle and tustle in de wind's house!

One wind tossed her dis way, t'o'her fling her dat way, n'o'her swing her yonder, y'o'her slung her round-about! She was whirl and twirl twel her head got dizzy, dough she al'a's was light-headed. De ole folks say she open her mouf ter ax dem winds:

“Please, sah, lemme go!
I won't come heah no mo'.
Oh, do, you, lemme go!”

And des as soon as she open her mouf to say dem words de song got clean blowed outen her mouf, and got so mixed up wid de winds dat she nuver could git hit back no mo'.

Den dey say dat all de winds went one way and whirled her out of dere house; dey whirl her out so swif' dat she caught some er de winds' rustlin' sound on her wings as she swep' out. She got rustlin' sound on her wings twel yit.

HUMMING BIRD LOST HER VOICE

And de Li'l' Breeze kept some of de Hummin'
Bird's song.

What'd she see in de wind's house?

Chillen, she wan't nuver able to tell, 'caze her
voice was clean done gone.

Chillen, 'tain't nuver good to go pryin' and
spyin' into y'o'her folks' business.

XVI

BRER POSSUM ROUTS BRER LION

ONE day Brer Possum and Brer Tarrapin was walkin' 'long toge'her behime dem dark pines. Dar never was two easier goin' two dan dem two, ef nothin' don't 'sturb dey minds; but des let some'in' happen—den—dem two tries not to be dar! 'Caze Brer Possum he is guve up to be de skeeriest man in de big woods and ef dar is any fight in Brer Tarrapin hit's mighty deep in 'caze nobody ain't yit fotch much fight outer him.

Dem two was confabulatin' 'long mighty sociable like when dar sudden riz right nigh 'em a rockin' roar, fit to make de earth shake. Hit set Brer Possum quakin'. "Yah-ah-ah—" says Brer Possum, his teefes chatterin' in his head, "Brer Lion is on us! I des as good as kilt and eat and bones licked now——"

"Yoh-oh-oh! I feels mise'f in de soup pot now," says Brer Tarrapin. "Save us, Brer Possum, save us!"

BREER POSSUM ROUNTS BREER LION

“Save us? How I gwine save us?” says Brer Possum. “Save my life I can’t save us.”

Brer Lion’s roar hit sounded nigher. Brer Possum he skeereder’n’ skeereder. Bein’ de most skeered he could be, he retch out and grab holt er Brer Tarrapin’s tail s’ as to have a holt er some’in’ in what he do fear gwine be de last hour. No sooner he ketch holt of Brer Tarrapin’s tail dan thoo de bushes bust Brer Lion and dar he stand r’ared up right befo’ dem two.

“Who dis li’l’ fat man I see befo’ me?” says Brer Lion, says he.

“Who, me?” says Brer Possum, says he. “Naw, sah, I ain’t no li’l’ fat man, sah.”

Brer Lion he retch out a paw and he thump Brer Possum as folks do thump watermelons to see ef dey do be ripe.

“Fat! So fat!” says Brer Lion.

“Fat? Naw, sah, not dat,” says Brer Possum, says he, “I des swole some ’long er eatin’ green simmons, sah.”

“Fat li’l’ man! Fat li’l’ man!” says Brer Lion.

“Who, me?” says Brer Possum, skeered to clean desperation. “Naw, sah, not me, sah. I ain’t li’l’, sah. I’m large. I’m a high-j’inted man. I’m a giant.”

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

“Who, you? You large? You a giant? Prove it, you li'l' man, prove it,” and Brer Lion he roar fit to shake de sun in hit's socket.

Brer Possum he know hit's now er never and he lift up Brer Tarrapin by de tail, he do, and he say, says he, “I'm a giant. I'm a giant, and I'll prove hit. Dis heah's a flea I des done cotch offer my year!” Brer Lion he take one 'stonish look at de size er dat flea—said to be—and den Brer Lion he turn clean on his track and run kitin'. Run like de woods was afire! Not even Brer Lion hisse'f want'er git into no 'sputement wid a man what totes fleas er dat dimension.

Chillen, 'tain't no tellin' what buncombe'll hit de boaster hardest.

XVII

HOW THE NEWS OF THE WILD WOOD GOT ABROAD

WHEN de Preacher Crows, all a-wearin' of dey Sunday blacks, lef' Miss Susan's house, dey went straight as dey could fly—and you know de crow flies mighty straight—to de corn fields and dar dey went to pickin' up de fraish green corn, peckin' hit up des as soon as it sprout.

Well, dat sho did pester Johnny Mingo. He Miss Susan's one old nigger man, fooled heah fum Africa for to work. He got dat corn to work, and when hit don't yiel' good folk think he shirk. Ev'y spring ef he plant fer a bushel, he git a peck, ef he plant fer a peck he git a pocketful.

Dem crows so cunning. But Johnny Mingo, he got cunning ways hisse'f. He done hisse'f come out de fur woods and deep de woods and he done brung a many a cunnin' way out wid him. He so pestered wid dem crows dat he go on de

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

sly to de bean-locust tree, and he cut him off a long sharp thorn, sharp as a needle sho's you born. He wait twel de deep night, and den he go to de ve'y middle er de fiel' and he pick out de highes', riches', greenes' blade er corn what done sprout. He stick dat thorn wid de p'int up right whar de grain er sproutin' corn do be.

Dar!

He go back 'crost de fiel' rakin' dirt over his tracks wid his fingers, so as he can fool dem crows so dat dey won't think nobody done been 'long dar. Johnny Mingo he 'low:

“Oho!

Johnny Mingo

Fool 'em ole crow!”

Nex' mornin' fust day Johnny Mingo stand spyin' out de bushes on de wood edge watchin' out fer dem roguish Preacher Crows.

“Here dey come, ev'y Preacher Crow,
Fust de leader—Oh, ve'y ole Preacher Crow;
Right to dat highes' blade he go,
Peck at hit—des so.”

Dar!

Dat locust thorn hit split dat crow's tongue, split hit clean in two as a knife blade could ha' done.

You know twel yit, ef a crow's tongue is split



“Here dey come, ev’y Preacher Crow.”

NEWS OF THE WILD WOOD

he can talk fine and fit. To dis day ef you split a crow's tongue he will talk des as natchal as folks —ef de cuttin' don't kill him."

Dat old leader Crow he could talk den, you know. But he ain't got nobody in his crowd dat he kin talk to. He done los' de crow talk offen his tongue as soon as dat thorn split his tongue. He git mighty lonesome, he do, dat ole leader Crow. He git mighty hungry, too, fer he feared to peck corn any mo' in de new sproutin' fiel'.

Johnny Mingo he watch dat ole leader Crow. He see he ole and he black and he lonesome, and he gittin' raggity and mo' raggity ev'y day. He see dat Crow done git missed of his own fambly talk, can't talk no mo' wid his own folks, b'leeged ef he talk at all to talk stranger talk, and Johnny Mingo, he sorry fer dat ole leader Crow, him a leader no mo'.

Johnny Mingo study 'bout him hisse'f ole, and black and lonesome, and gittin' raggity and raggitier ev'y day, he done also got missed er his own talk, same as old Preacher Crow, b'leeged to talk stranger talk ef he do talk at all, and he so des collude to tole that ole leader Crow right up to his do', so dat him 'n' dat old Crow can talk toge'her nights.

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

So ev'y day or so Johnny Mingo he spread a handful er corn front er his do'-step. And ev'y day or so de ole leader Crow come to Johnny Mingo's do'. He peck up dat corn, den dem two talk toge'her nights.

Dat ole Crow he tell Johnny Mingo all de news of de wile woods, he tell him of all de migras 'bout de birds and de beas'es.

Ev'y sence dem days folks been knowin' and tellin' dem tales.

Chillen, stick to your own kin and kind.

XVIII

HOW BRER FLEA OUTWITS BRER RABBIT

BRER RABBIT never is been got ahead of but onct. Ef he is I ain't hearn of it. And dat time he was got ahead of by a man smaller dan him, and weaker dan him. No lesser man dan Brer Flea hisse'f.

Brer Rabbit and Brer Flea was bof un 'em visitin' de same gal.

Hit come 'bout ev'y time er so, no matter how soon Brer Rabbit git dar Brer Flea he done been dar some time. 'Time Brer Rabbit come lopin' in, him standin' at de door stompin' de dust offen his feet, breshin' de dust offen his shoulders, he look roun'. Dar, he see Brer Flea his hands tangled in de skein er yarn dat gal was windin' offer.

Come 'long one day Brer Rabbit and Brer Flea was bof settin' on a log talkin' toge'her 'way 'crost settlements from whar dat gal's house was, and Brer Rabbit thinks to hisse'f dis is de time he gwine git ahead er Brer Flea.

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

Brer Flea he can't walk a step, he can't run a step, 'bleeged to go in des a hop, skip and jump, and Brer Rabbit he do know dat he hisse'f can run. He study right now de time he gwine match his strength wid Brer Flea. He 'low: "Brer Flea," sez he, "I'm a gwine right now," sez he, "'crost settlements to see dat gal."

Brer Flea he don't wait fer no more, he don't. He up and sez, sez he, "Brer Rabbit, I go 'long wid you."

Brer Rabbit he say:

"Oh, man, no,
You go too slow."

"Nummine," sez Brer Flea, "des gimme even chances wid you and I lay I'll beat you dar. Time you git dar," sez he, "you'll see me settin' wid my hands tangled up in de yarn dat dat gal is windin' off."

Brer Rabbit he say:

"Oh, no, man, no—
Man, you too slow."

Any how Brer Rabbit tuck up de dare of de race, and dem two got ready to start out. Dey was des ten telegram postes off fum dat gal's house.

Brer Rabbit, he say:

BRER FLEA OUTWITS BRER RABBIT

“One! Two! Three!
Start—you’n’ me!”

Off Brer Rabbit start wid er jump, run, cut de pigeon-wing, run ag’in.

Des ’fo’ Brer Rabbit start Brer Flea done hop on Brer Rabbit’s tail. He so li’l’ and light Brer Rabbit don’t feel de weight of him.

Brer Rabbit he run ’long keerless, so small a man ag’in him. When he git to de fust telegram pole, he stop short on his haunches. He grin fer to think how fur behime is Brer Flea. He holler: “Oh—a, Brer Flea!”

Brer Flea ansah from off de telegram pole: “Brer Rabbit, heah—a—me!”

Brer Rabbit look. Sho ’nough dar set Brer Flea shinin’ black on de telegram pole. He des done hop on hit off Brer Rabbit’s tail. Brer Rabbit, he was a ’stonish man. He sez, say he:

“Well, well,
Dat beat me!
How you git heah,
Brer Flea?”

Brer Flea he des give him de ansah:

“Brer Rabbit, I tole you so,
Brer Rabbit, you ’low: ‘Oh, no!’”

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

Brer Rabbit, he good 'stonish, he 'low :

“Yit and still, Brer Flea,
You shall not beat me!
I'll run-a my bes',
I'll run-a my res',
Ef I run my head in a hornet's nest!”

Brer Rabbit he lit out ag'in. Dis time he run mo' steady. Des as he start ag'in Brer Flea done lip on his tail ag'in, and dar he set holdin' on wid bof his hands as Brer Rabbit run.

Nex' telegram pole Brer Flea done ag'in give a for'ard jump offen Brer Rabbit's tail and dar he set on de telegram pole agin.

Brer Rabbit, he call, 'spectin no ansah: “Oh—a—Brer Flea!”

Brer Flea say, says he: “Brer Rabbit, heah—a—me!”

Brer Rabbit he mo' 'stonished dan befo', he say, says he:

“Gracious goodness—a me!
And you don't look scarce
Blowed, Brer Flea!”

Brer Flea gin him de ansah back :

“No, man, you see,
Dis runnin' naught to me!”

BRER FLEA OUTWITS BRER RABBIT

Dat was de way hit was an ev'y one er dem telegram poles 'fo' dey gits to de gal's house, Brer Rabbit he 'low at de las' pole from de gal's house:

“Brer Flea, dis de las' chase,
Dis de end of de race.
I lay you don't beat dis one—
'Caze I know I can run.”

Brer Flea he des as rested as a man out a job, he 'low:

“Mind out, Brer Rabbit, you smart,
And you got a fair start
But I lay dat I shall
Be de fust reach de gal
Time at de do' you do stand,
I be wid de yarn in her hand.”

Brer Rabbit, he start out ag'in. 'Time Brer Rabbit fetch his strengt' fer de fust jump, Brer Flea done lip on his tail. He hol's on wid bof hands and take it easy.

Brer Rabbit he fair to'up de earth a-runnin' and er jumpin'. He pantin' and puffin' and his tongue lappin' out. He jump in de do' er dat gal's house, 'gin to wink de dus' ouden his eyes so's he can see.

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

Time he hit de do'-step Brer Flea he hop off
Brer Rabbit's tail and jump to de hank er yarn
in de gal's hands what she windin' fum. He
say, says Brer Flea:

“Brer Rabbit—he—he—he!
You look tired to me!”

Den Brer Rabbit he gin up de chase and 'low
he fair los' dat race.

Chillen, don't never trus' des to main strengt',
if cunnin' be ag'in you.

XIX

HOW BRER COON LOST HIS SHOES

DAR wa'n't in de ole days no mo' fait'ful friends dan Brer Possum and Brer Coon. And dar wa'n't dem days nothin' er de po'try kind safe from dem two; ef Brer Possum steal on de east er de hen roost, Brer Coon meet him on de west and dey two des 'vide de ketch 'cordin' to appetite and no talk er even er odd.

One night Brer Possum and Brer Coon start des as friendly from behime dem dark pines to de hen house in de settlement. Dey go 'long side'n' side twel dey come to de creek. Dat Brer Coon, he say: "So long, Brer Possum, I see you later." Wid dat he dash in de water and swim 'crost 'caze Brer Coon he know dat Brer Possum he feared er water and he gotter go way 'round by de foot logs.

Round by de foot logs Brer Possum he go, and when he git to de aidge er de woods Brer Coon he a'ready dar waitin' fer de moon to go down so dat dey can safe get a supper sech as dey ap-

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

petites do crave. Brer Coon he done rake up bark and dry leaves and done made a li'll slow fire fer to dry his shoes. Brer Coon he's a man don't fear fire, don't fear water, fer a gre't fisherman is Brer Coon twel yit.

Brer Possum he's a man feared er fire, feared er water, 'bleeged to feed high and dry. De smell er de smoke er Brer Coon's fire make Brer Possum right rale sick right now. Brer Coon and his folks ain't been neither bake nor brile, so dey don't know de feel er fire and dey don't feel de fear er fire.

Brer Coon he set and turn his shoes dis way and dat way front de fire fer to dry 'em. Brer Possum's shoes dry 'caze he done been feared to git his foots wet. He set and sweat and most wish dat he had had grit to git his foots wet. De smell er de smoke er Brer Coon's fire hit make Brer Possum madder'n' madder and hit fetch up a ole time dissatisfaction in Brer Possum's mind, so he say, says he: "Brer Coon, I ax you dis what I been layin' off to ax you fer de longes'. How come when us bof robs de hen roost dat you git free to de big woods ev'y time and me'n' my folks git cotch a many times and mo'?"

Brer Coon he see how Brer Possum he set and

HOW BRER COON LOST HIS SHOES

sweat and git sick wid de smell er smoke, and he 'cide as dey do be friends dat he'll des up and tell him de truf and see if dat'll sorter 'suage his rage. So he set and turn his shoes befo' de fire and he say, says he, "Brer Possum, I gwine tell you dat what ain't yit been tole out de fambly er we all. Dese heah shoes dat you see me dryin' s' keerful, dey is fo'-mile-shoes. Yassah, dat what dey is; and mo'n dat, dey don't left no track like youse shoes."

Dar! Brer Possum he mo' rile dan befo' fer to think dat Brer Coon safe fit out in shoes dat'll keep him al'a's in de front er de race, so he don't say nothin', des set and sweat and study how he could fix fer to even up de race wid Brer Coon. D'rectly he say: "Brer Coon, bein' you been heah long 'nough to git rested and I ain't, s'pose you go to de aidge er de settlement and see ef Watchman Goose is yit drap noddin'."

Brer Coon, he say, "So said so done, and I thank you, Brer Possum, whilst I be gone to des turn my shoes li'l' back and fort' 'fo' de fire." Den Brer Coon he was off round de cornder fer to see ef Goose was yit wake and watchin'.

Time Brer Coon git good round dat cornder Brer Possum he up and th'ow Brer Coon's shoes

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

in dat fire, and den he out and gone fer de fur woods.

When Brer Coon come lopin' back shoes gone, friend gone. Brer Coon he been a bare-foot man ever sence. And mo'n dat he leave a track now same as all dat tread, and now Brer Coon he hate Brer Possum wò's'n Brer Possum hate smoke. Brer Possum he don't love to fight, but he 'bleeged to fight or lose he life ev'y time he meet up wid Brer Coon in de big woods.

Chillen, foul play don't hold fast friends.

XX

WHERE MISTER SNAKE'S CUNNING FAILED HIM

MISTER SNAKE he was gittin' hongry for frog meat. Hit des look like a frog leg or two would des set de bes' on his stomach. He was quailed up on de bank studyin' 'bout how hongry he was when he hear a li'l' frog say 'it was 'bout time and hour to study 'bout what to have for supper. Um-hum! Somebody else hongry 'sides him.

De li'l' lady frog she sing out dat dar ain't nothin' nicer fer supper dan:

“Fried bacon! Fried bacon!
Fried bacon! Fried bacon!”

De ole man frog he gi'e back de ansah as nothin' 'd suit him better. He say dat's a meal fit fer de:

“President! President!
President!”

De frogs set round de pond and talk 'bout dey wishter have:

“Fried bacon! Fried bacon!”

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

And as dat 'd be good 'nough fer de:

“President! President!”

Twel Mister Snake couldn't s'port his honger no longer. He couldn't stand it no longer. He come slippin' and slidin' up nigh de pond. He know dem frogs gwine 'scape him ef he let 'em git skeered of him, so he come up closter and closter to 'em, hissinn' as he come:

“Slippin' and slidin' on a slimy log,
I ain't gwine eat nairy 'nother frog!”

De li'l' lady frog she lif' up her voice and give Mister Snake de ansah:

“Ting! Ting!
Glad er dat! Glad er dat!
Glad er dat! Glad er dat!”

Dey have er regular chorus-song round de pond in de swamp, behime dem dark pines. Mister Snake, hissinn':

“Slip and slide on de slimy log
Never is to eat a frog!”

And de li'l' frogs jine in toge'her to sing at him:

THE
FROG



“I ain’t gwine to eat nairy ’nother frog!”

MISTER SNAKE'S CUNNING

“Ting! Ting!

Glad er dat! Glad er dat!

Glad er dat! Glad er dat!”

Mister Snake he done slip up on 'em mos' nigh 'nough to catch and snatch one, whilst dey singin' so gaily 'bout dey glad he ain't gwine to eat no mo' frogs.

Now he nigh 'nough. He fling hisse'f out to git de fattes' frog on de log, but—Ker—splash! Splash! Dash!

In de pond go de frogs! Mister Snake don't git nairy one!

Ole Mister Frog he hid behime de log, he holler to Mister Snake:

“Yer didn't do it!

Yer didn't do it!

Yer didn't do it!

Yer didn't do it!”

Mister Snake didn't have no frog legs fer his supper dat night. And atter dat de frogs was mo' skeered er Mister Snake dan ever.

Chillen, 'ceivin' don't all time fetch success.

XXI

WHY GRAN'DADDY LONG-LEGS KNOWS ABOUT THE COWS

HE was ol'er even dan Johnny Mingo. He wan't right real black. He was kinder Injun color. He wan't Ebo nor Molly-gloster neither. He was des a ole, ole wizzle-up mustee-colored man. He all time keep a quar'lin' to hisse'f. Ef 't wan't dis to quar'l 'bout 'twas dat. But de mo'es' of de quar'lin' he done was 'bout he all de time hatter go at' de cows.

He quar'l all time desso: Don't see howcome he de onlies' man what can make out to fin' de cows; don't see howcome nobody but him can find dem cows; don't know howcome nobody 'cept 'tis him on de whole plantation hatter go at' dem cows.

He gwine on one late dusk-dark in de deep swamp quar'lin' to hisse'f des dat way. He quar'lin' desso: Don't know how 'tis nobody on de place know how to find de cows but him. Dey all got heads to study whar dey be same's him.

GRAN'DADDY LONG-LEGS

Dey all got legs to walk at' dem cows same's him. He ought to have mo' legs dan des de two he is got, ef he all time gotter go at' dem cows. He wisht he did have a many-a-mo' legs dan de two he is got.

Dar. Look like soon as he speak dem words he g'in to feel a cu'us feelin'. He callin' dem cows:

“Sook! Sook! Blossom! Bee!
Sally! Spot! Sook-ey-ey!
Sook—oh—cow!
Sook—oh—oh—cow!”

Dat de las' time old gran'daddy call dem cows. He done complain and quar'l de las' word too much. 'Fo' he knowd what de matter, he drap on de ground. Soon as his fingers tetch de ground dey split up ev'y one clean to his shoul- ders; his toes dey split up ev'y one to his hip- j'int. Dey all fingers and toes gotter be long legs, dey did, des like he quar'l fer.

He got dem many and mo' legs yet, he is. A big round head and a passel of legs. Dat all he was den. Dat all he is now. But twel yit he ain't fergit what he know—and dat is whar de cows be. 'Twel yit ev'y time you ax one of dem

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

gran'daddy long-legs, "Whicher-way-de-cows?"
—dey'll do des like de fust one done—find 'em.

Ax one of dem funny bugs:

"Gran'daddy! Gran'daddy! Whicher—way—de—cows?
Gran'daddy! Gran'daddy! Whicher—way—de—cows?"

Yonder way he'll p'int. Whicherway dem
cows is dar'll he p'int.

Chillen, hit ain't good to quar'l *too* much.
Dem what quar'l 'bout nothin', soon gwine have
somethin' to quar'l 'bout.

XXII

HOW BRER RABBIT RID OUR WOODS OF THE ELEPHANTS

ONE time Brer Elephant ax Brer Rabbit will he crap wid him, in and thoo. Brer Rabbit he a mighty smart man, and he lazy like smart folks is, and he study ef he work in and thoo wid Brer Elephant, den he can mostly res' and not wrastle, 'caze Brer Elephant sho can plow a fiel' whilst Brer Rabbit can pull a row. So Brer Rabbit he up and sign de rent-note and de crap-lien wid Brer Elephant.

Brer Elephant, he sho do work, but den he set dat fiel' to suit hisse'f. He set hit all in guinea-grass, plantin' fer hay.

Miss Rabbit, she right den pestered in her min' 'bout dat crap. She say dat crap too dry to eat, and too raggity to wear, and what can you do wid hit?

Brer Rabbit he some dubious, also, but he won't give in. He 'low: "Hit'll make mighty nice, fresh beddin' fer winter."

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

Lawsy-massy-me! How dat crap did grow! Hit sweep like a green river done riz outer hits banks in a spring-time freshet, hit sweep over de whole fiel'. Brer Rabbit 'bleeged to give in to Brer Elephant as he never did see sech yiel' to any fiel'.

Gadderin' time come, Brer Rabbit he set wid his foots drawed up on de top er de rail fence lookin' at dat crap. He say to his pardner:

"Brer Elephant, business is business," sez he.

"How you gwine 'vide dis crap wid me?"

Dat's all dat Brer Rabbit has a anxious min' 'bout, dat 'vidin' of de crap.

Brer Elephant he got a big min' like a big man do have, and he make ansah:

"Brer Rabbit, you li'l, least and so small,
I'll give you fust choice of all!"

Dat soun' so fair dat Brer Rabbit study hit can't be square, 'caze Brer Rabbit he so cunnin' hisse'f dat he do have a distrust'us min' 'bout ev'ybody be cunnin' like he.

Brer Elephant he feel so good 'bout dat full crap dat he blow out jobly:

BRER RABBIT AND THE ELEPHANTS

“Hoo—too—too!
Hey, li'l' man,
Mo' short dan a span,
When you git some,
Who'll tote hit home?
Fer you are so small,
You, yo' folks and all!”

Dat make Brer Rabbit de maddes'; fer ef he do be li'l' he wanter feel big, so he make ansah:

“Ef I fit in a thimble,
Yit I quick and nimble!
Us'll 'vide up de yiel'
What each'll tote out de fiel',
Me, my folks, and all
Us swif' dough us small!”

Brer Elephant see Brer Rabbit gwine try ter trick him runnin' in on him all his folks and his kinnery, yit he lay he'll fix him. He blow out jobly:

“Hoo—too—too!
Come, all er you,
Heap it so high,
When it git dry,
Keep watch on de sky.
Hit gwine rain by—m—bye!”

Brer Rabbit he 'low dat dis is one time he ain't gwine git fool in de 'vidin'; he 'low ef he

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

put in all his fambly, his folks and his fellers
in de fiel' dey can tote off de bigges' portion-part
er de yiel'.

Brer Elephant he workin' and not watchin',
and dem li'l' Rabbits dey is des scamperin' and
frolicin' and rollickin' in dem piles er grass.
Brer Elephant he ain't 'sturbed 'bout de
numberin', he lumberin' round and workin'. He
make de trees trimble wid his blowin'.

"Hoot—toot—toot—too!
Show what you can do!"

Dat rile Brer Rabbit again. Hit mighty bad
fer a li'l' man ter feel big; hit sho gwine cos' him
some'in' ef he do. Brer Rabbit say:

"Brer Elephant take you de road
Wid de ve'y fust load."

Dat's 'caze he don't want Brer Elephant ter see
what li'l' loads him'n' his folks can tote.

Brer Elephant say:

"Hoot—toot—too—too!
See what I can do!"

Elephant he tickle at dat li'l' man, feelin' so

BRER RABBIT AND THE ELEPHANTS

big, and he show it. Brer Rabbit he mad 'caze he know it. Brer Elephant say:

“Hey, li'l man,” sez he,
“Y' all come and load me;
I des want to show you
What one full-growed man can do.”

Brer Rabbit, his fambly, his fellers and his folks, dey set in to load Brer Elephant. Brer Elephant, he help hist de fust loads wid his trunk. Dem Rabbits dey tote and dey load, dey load, and dey tote. Hit 'pears like Brer Elephant gwine tote all de yiel'.

Miss Rabbit she 'gin to quar'l and argue like women folks does do. She say t'ain't gwine be lef' 'nough de year's crap to make beddin' fer de trundle bed, let 'lone de whole house.

Brer Rabbit he done give de word, “Let ev'y man have what he can tote,” and he 'bleeged to stan' to his word and ballot vote, but Miss Rabbit's arguin' sho do rile him. He say:

“Brer Elephant, yo' load is sky high,
Lef' de res' fer by—m—bye.”

Brer Elephant he see now dat he 'bout ter trick Brer Rabbit 'stidder Brer Rabbit trick him;

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

he made de groun' shake wid his laughin' and his blowin':

"Hoot—toot—too—hoot—toot—too!
Dis a light load fer me—Who?
Pile on mo'," sez he,
"I don't feel dis load—Who, me?"

Li'l' Rabbits dey keep totin' and loadin' on. Dey so wo' out and 'stonish at de 'mount Brer Elephant can take dat dey eyes 'bout ter pop out dey heads. Miss Rabbit she see de fiel' outrageous clean now, as bar' as Brer Possum's tail. She say she wisht Brer Rabbit would talk and 'vise wid her 'fo' he pitch his crap wid a tee-total stranger from way 'crost 'nother plantation. She done lit her pipe wid a chunk dat de least Rabbit done brung from de nighes' neighbor cabin, 'caze de fiel' too clean now to fear fire. She smokin' and grumblin'.

Brer Elephant, under all dat pile er grass holler:

"Brer Rabbit, can't you
Pile on mo'?
Hoot—toot—too!"

Brer Rabbit give de ansah:

"Hi! You under dar?
Ef you is, tell me whar?"



“‘Brer Elephant, yo’ load is sky high.’”

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BRER RABBIT AND THE ELEPHANTS

Yo' load now so high
Dat hit nigh touch de sky!"

Brer Rabbit he make sign to Miss Rabbit dat she bring him dat chunk er fire. He say to Brer Elephant:

"Hi, Brer Big Man,
Move out ef you can!"

Brer Elephant he laugh and he holler.

"Hoot—toot—too—too!
Li'l' man, I tell you,
Put on de las' straw
By yo' own 'vidin' law!
Dis heah portion-part
Ain't a half—ain't a start!"

Brer Rabbit he blow on dat chunk er fire twixt de palm er his hands. He tech hit to dat heap er dry grass; hit ketch quick and fas'.

Brer Elephant, he holler:

"Li'l' man, I smell fire!
Don't heap hit no higher."

Brer Rabbit, he 'low:

"You heaped now so high,
You smell de heat er de sky!"

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

Brer Elephant 'gin to feel de heat er dat burnin' grass. He holler :

“Li'l' man, I feel fire!
Don't heap hit no higher!”

Brer Rabbit give him de ansah :

“You heaped up so high,
You feel heat from de sky.”

Brer Elephant shake hisse'f. De sparks dey des fly, but dat fiel' so clean dat dar ain't even no stubble to ketch. Brer Elephant holler :

“Don't heap me no higher,
De world is afire!
Run, people, run,
I done catch by de sun!”

Den Brer Elephant he lit out, he did, flingin' fire as he go.

Brer Rabbit he set back in dat bar' fiel' and nigh 'bout kill hisse'f laughin'.

Brer Elephant he git swunged ha'r and a rusty hide from dat fire. He got 'em twel yit, and he des manage to save his trunk out er dat fire. He lef' dis country. You don't find him or his folks in dis part de world no mo'.

Chillen, hit don't do to put yo' trus' in cunnin' folks, no matter how li'l' and least dey be.

XXIII

WHY BRER POSSUM AND BRER PIG PARTED COMPANY

RIGHT now anybody what taste possum and pig will say dat dem two is like er nigh like, kin er been kin; but possum and pig ain't claimin' kin no mo'. Hit useter been cousin dis and cousin dat, now hit mo' like cussin' dis and discussin' dat.

Hit was when dem two was friends dat Brer Pig propose to Brer Possum dat dey two raise a crap together, in and thoo. Brer Possum he say he don't keer ef he do. Brer Pig he say long as Brer Possum live funderer in de woods dan he do, hatter come funder back'n' fort' to de clearin', he'll let him take whiche'er part de crap he choose, top er bottom. Brer Possum, ruther trust des what he can see, say he'll take de top crap. Brer Pig he 'cide den and dar to plant goobers. Dat year den Brer Possum and his people git po'erer from de fall to de spring er de year.

Next year, time to pitch crap ag'in, Brer Pig

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

say, "Brer Possum, you done wrong las' year. You done ruint yo'se'f choosin' wrong, now I gin you fust choose ag'in and dis time take keer you don't lose."

Brer Possum he right ready choose, "Bottom crap." Den Brer Pig he set de fiel' in cabbages. Dat year Brer Possum and his folks fall off from gadderin' time to new plowin' season. Dey mos' can hear dey bones rattle in dey skin. Still and yit ev'y plantin' season Brer Pig give de choice er which part de crop he take to Brer Possum—and den choose what de crap gwine be.

At last Brer Possum he say come choose, come lose, he ain't gwine crap no mo' wid no sech a greedy man as Brer Pig. All dat time Brer Pig he been movin', up closter and closter to Mister Man's house and eatin' li'l' mo'n' mo' er Mister Man's chucked out vittles and gittin' lazier and gittin' fatter, so he say as he don't keer nohow, and he say mo'n dat he gwine to quit claimin' kin wid sech a wile lookin', weedy lookin' critter as Brer Possum was den.

Wid dat dem two parted comp'ny. From dat day Brer Possum stopped plantin' and took to lookin' high fer his vittles. He live and he thrive off de persimmon and de muscadine. From dat

BRER POSSUM AND BRER PIG

day Brer Pig got lazier and looked lower fer his vittles; and right now you find him livin' off swill and slops, gone to wallowin' and long since quit workin.'

Chillen, cheatin' ways may fatten, but dey don't lead to freedom.

XXIV

EVERY CLOUD HAS ITS SILVER LINING

JAY'S a onlucky bird and a pesterin' one. He's eatin' young birds outer y'o'her birds' nests, suckin' y'o'her birds' eggs. De birds hates him like folks hates er suck-egg dog. He ruins de grapes, he spiles de pea-vines, he's up to all sorter devilment.

He done sole hisse'f to de devil fer less dan nought and he b'leeged to go to de bad place ev'y Friday 'twixt twelve o'clock and t'ree o'clock and tote down a splinter er kindlin'-wood fer to keep dat fire hot.

Nobody won't eat Jaybird. Nobody ain't never heard of a Jaybird pie. Li'l' mo'n' he did like to git cooked up onct, but he des did 'scape wid his life.

He been doin' his devilment round Johnny Mingo so long dat Johnny Mingo was clean wo' out wid him. Ev'y day Johnny Mingo go 'bout his business dar was Jay right front him, or side him, or behime him callin':

"Caleb! Caleb! Caleb!"

EVERY CLOUD HAS SILVER LINING

Johnny Mingo 'low:

"I ain't name Caleb! No;
I name Johnny Mingo."

Jaybird 'low:

"Caleb! Caleb! Caleb!"

Johnny Mingo 'low:

"I'll still you!
I'll kill you
And I'll try
Jaybird pie!"

Sho 'nough he set a trap fer Jay and caught him. Done caught him—now kill him. Johnny Mingo reach in de trap, pull Jay out by de neck, he say:

"Now, I 'spec',
I wring yo' neck!"

He wring Mister Jay round and round by de neck, fling him on de ground. He 'low his head'll fly one way, his body-part'll flutter t'o'her way like a chicken go when folks wrings dey necks.

Brer Jay hit de ground. Ker-blip! Den up he riz! Off he fly! He holler same as ever:

"Caleb! Caleb! Caleb!"

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

He call fer Caleb jes' as nachal as ever. He been thoo smoke and fire so much, Jay is, dat his neck is des nachally tanned and tough as leather. He done git some good outer dem Friday trips ef nobody else ain't. Folks don't try to wring Jaybirds' necks no mo' sence dat day.

Chillen, troubles is val'able. De ole folks say ev'y bile on yo' flesh saves you a fever.

XXV

“TRUS’ OR INTRUS’”

BUZZARD and Hawk one time had a talk. Hawk say he live by de hardes’. He say he borry, he lend, he make or take money of ev’y friend. He say he watch de hens hatch fer to keep up wid de catch. He say: “Hit’s hard, but hit’s fair. Dry bread ain’t greasy, hard work ain’t easy.” But de end er de year, he ain’t yet square; he got a livin’ maybe, but de intrus’ yit dare.

Buzzard, he ’low he des take life easy, he sho to run up on somethin’ greasy. He eat des what he find; he don’t ever ’sturb his mind. He des trus’ dat us mus’ live and eat.

Hawk say, sech talk’d starve any hawk. He say you mought fly all day and not find anythin’ in de way. He say he ruther watch and know how his pervisions grow.

Buzzard hold his way is de best, hit give him a chance to study and rest.

Des den Hawk see a hen walk out de po’try

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

yard to de wood edge, right behime her a brooder chickens, nice and fat. He say:

“Brer Buzzard, see dat?
I done watch ’em git fat—
Dem chick—ens——!”

Wid dat—down he dart! But he made a wrong start, and he make a cross dart. He come down on de osage hedge ’stidder on de wood edge. An osage thorn ketch him—hol’ him tight—dar! Sech a plight!

Brer Buzzard he float down easy to de topmos’ limb of dat hedge, he say:

“Oho! Brother—oh,
Didn’t I tole you so?
I waits fer my meat,
When hit come, den I eat.
Hit come sho’,
I seek hit? No, no——”

Dar Brer Hawk hang, a meal’s meat fer one.

Brer Buzzard, um—hum, I don’t say what he done.

But de Hawk and Buzzard fambly ain’t been much friendly sence dat day.

Chillen, rich folks lives on intrus’, po’ folks lives on trus’; one livin’s sho’, de y’o’her easier, I know.

THE
CATCH



"Watch de hen's hatch fer to keep up wid de catch."

TO THE
MEMBERS OF THE
COMMISSIONERS OF THE
LAND OFFICE

XXVI

HOW BRER POSSUM LOST HIS OWN SHOES

ONE night Brer Possum come slow 'long de woods path draggin' his behime foots. He mighty hongry, he is, 'caze he misses dat chicken dat he now gits missed of sence him'n' Brer Coon done broke comp'ny. He study 'bout de good times dat him'n' Brer Coon uster have safe robbin' de hen roosts when heah he come right to de creek bank and a-dar right 'crost from him at de do' er her holler-tree-house set Sis Owl and she was stirrin' de richest sorter pot er chicken soup and a-singin' as she stir:

“Chicken soup's so good!
Chicken soup's so good!
Robber! Robber! Shoe boot!”

When Sis Owl lif' de lid, out fly de richest sorter scent. Hit 'nough to make any man's mouf water let 'lone Brer Possum been so long starve of his favorite meat.

Brer Possum, his jaws drippin', call 'crost de creek, "Sis Owl, I please and pray, retch de ladle 'crost de creek and give me des one taste er dat rich soup!"

Sis Owl say de ladle's long and de creek nar-rer, but 'tain't dat long and hit 'tain't dat narrer, but she say heah de pot and ef Brer Possum has a mind to sop, all he gotter do is to come over and take his fill ef so it take from de top to de bottom er de pot to 'suage his honger.

Dat sound mighty good to Brer Possum and hit set him grinnin', and he ax Sis Owl which er way de foot log. Sis Owl say nobody dat she done invite to her cook pot done yit wait to find de foot log when de ford right by 'em. She say dar won't anyhow be no lack er folks to feed offen dat pot come late moon rise, 'caze she done got words dat a many a neighbor gwine to pass dat way dat night and all is mo'n apt to stop and taste de pot.

Dat too much fer Brer Possum. Mo'n dat Sis Owl set and stir and de smell er dat soup sweep all over de swamp. Brer Possum he gwine sop and swill from dat pot ef he swim to hit. Sis Owl she 'low ag'in, "Heah de pot and dar de ford," and in de creek Brer Possum go. Down

POSSUM LOST HIS OWN SHOES

he went! De water wet and de creek so cole!
Brer Possum wet and col'er, too.

Up he splutter and strike fer de y'o'her bank.
He don't stop to feel bottom, he don't, but he
give one brambrougous jump, and land hisse'f
knee deep in de mud. Dar! He jerk and he
jump and he des do manage to clear hisse'f, but
dar in de mud he left his shoes! Dem li'l' yaller
shoes he been all time s' keerful to keep from
gittin' wet. Dar dem li'l' yaller shoes stay and
dar dey took rot and dar dey growed and dar
dey grow twel yit. White folks call 'em lady
slipper flowers, but anybody can see dem li'l'
yaller bloons'll des fit Brer Possum's foots.

Chillen, take keer. De ill you do to y'o'her
folks mo'n apt to work back on yo'se'f.

XXVII

HOW CARELESS BRER B'AR LOST THE GOOBERS

BRER RABBIT and Brer Fox was talkin' toge'her one day settin' by de spring in de fur woods, when dey conclude dat dey'll stop workin' and git to specalatin'.

Word's been gwine round de settlement dat Brer B'ar done labor on his rich land and done raise a mighty crap er goobers. Brer B'ar he had a donkey and a dump-cyart, and he done gone to his fiel' piece down de big road to load up dem goobers and haul 'em home.

Brer Rabbit he study 'bout dat rich crap Brer B'ar done raise and he say to Brer Fox:

“Brer Fox, I sho' love goobers,
And I ain't raise one;
I want a many
And I ain't got none.”

He scratch behime his yeah and he study, he say to Brer Fox:

THE
CULTURE



“He slip off de behime part er de dump cyart.”

BRER B'AR LOST THE GOOBERS

“I ain't raise goobers,
Nairy a one;
But I will eat
A many a one.”

Den he start out towards home, holler back at
Brer Fox:

“You watch out,
You'll see what I 'bout.”

Brer Fox he hide on de road-side and watch
out fer to see what Mister Rabbit do be 'bout.

Brer Rabbit he run home and go searchin'
thoo' Miss Rabbit's cloze-chist. He find whar
be her bes' red ribbon that she won't wear
workin' days. Brer Rabbit he tie dat red ribbon
round his neck. He take de long bag from de
peg behime de do' and he run to de big road which
way Brer B'ar hatter haul his load. He lay
down in dat big road like he dead.

D'rectly heah come Brer B'ar, settin' up in
de dump-cyart, drivin' de donkey. De dump-
cyart des full of goobers.

Brer Rabbit lay right still in de big road.

Donkey come up on Brer Rabbit. He shy and
'nigh 'bout turn over de dump-cyart and all de
goobers.

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

Brer B'ar he git out de cyart. He look at Brer Rabbit, he say: "Um—hum! What man is dis?"

Brer Rabbit he lay right still. Don't say nothin'.

Brer B'ar he turn Brer Rabbit over. He lif' him up, he say: "He weigh good. Somebody done cut his th'roat. Hit red all 'round. He fat. I know dat. I'll take him home to my ole 'oman and us'll have rich stew. Dat's jest what I'll do."

He fling Brer Rabbit, bag'n'all on de dump-cyart, git on de cyart hisse'f and he drive 'long. Brer Rabbit he keep des as still.

Ridin' slow in de sun make Brer B'ar sleepy and d'rectly he drap noddin'. Soon as Brer Rabbit see him noddin' he up and fill his bag wid goobers. He got nigh 'bout th'ee thirds de load in his bag. Brer Rabbit he slide de bag down and he slip off de behime part er de dump cyart. He holler at Brer Fox, as he go by whar Brer Fox is hidin' and watchin' out:

"Goobers rich! Goobers good!
Oh, my honey! Wish you would
Raise a goober-crap fer me—
I can eat 'em up—he—he!

BRER B'AR LOST THE GOOBERS

Goobers on a rattan-vine!
Goobers hangin' rich and fine!
Ax me whar my goobers growed,
Tell you: In de State Big Road.

Goobers growin' in a cyart,
Brer B'ar lose de portion-part.
He raise a goober-crap fer me,
I got 'em in a bag, you see!

Specalatin's mighty fine,
Y'o'her folks yo' ax 'll grin'!
I can raise des all I eat,
Never work my hands nor feet!"

Far as Brer Fox hear Brer Rabbit he gwine
on singin'. Far as Brer Fox see, Brer B'ar
gwine on de Big Road nappin' and noddin'.

Chillen, take keer who yer take up wid gwine
'long de Big Road. Mo'n' dat don't drop nap-
pin' on de Big Road neither.

XXVIII

HOW MISTER RABBIT WAS PUNISHED FOR DISCONTENT

MISTER RABBIT' ain't of a discontented mind. He mos' al'a's take things easy, jobly and wid pleadjure. But one time he git mighty discontented, and he set studyin' 'bout what sorter critter is he. Li'l' and least of all. He ain't strong, he ain't long. He weak and he wizzled up.

He set on a log, his tail curled up over his back, fer he was long tail den, and he study 'bout, he wisht he was a big man. D'rectly he hear de wind in de pine over his head. 'Pear like to him hit say:

“Ou! Ou! Ou!
Go, you,
Pull out a toof,
Outen de roof
Of Alligator's mouf,
And den you'll be big
As ox, cow, or pig.
Ou! Ou! Ou!”

PUNISHED FOR DISCONTENT

Mister Rabbit he don't ax no mo' odds. He 'low he'll be a big man now sho. But den, Brer Alligator he *is* a big man and how is Mister Rabbit gwine catch Brer Alligator and keep him still 'long 'nough fer to let Mister Rabbit pull his toof?

Nummine! Mister Rabbit he a mighty cunnin' man.

He go git him er tent, he do, and he git him er fiddle, he do, and he set up his tent by de river-bank. He put his bed in de tent in one cornder, and he go set on a t'ree-legged stool in de y'o'her cornder and he go playin' on his fiddle:

“Dee—dee—
Dee—diddle—dee!
Dee—dee—
Dee—diddle—dee!”

Brer Alligator slippin' up and down de river, hear dat sound. Hit new sound round dar. Hit sound mighty pleasant to Brer Alligator. He come up de bank to listen. He see de tent. He b'lieve he'll go in and listen to dat good sound. He knock on de tent do'.

Mister Rabbit he say: “Come in. Whoe'er you been.”

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

In come Brer Alligator, he 'low:

“Mornin' up! Evenin' down!
I come to hear dat pleasin' soun'.”

Mister Rabbit, he 'low:

“Come right in,
Whoe'er you been;
Sit down
And hear de soun'.”

He go 'long playin':

“Dee—dee—
Dee—diddle—dee!
Dee—dee—
Dee—diddle!”

Brer Alligator set and listen, set and listen twel d'rectly he drap noddin'. Mister Rabbit he play on.

D'rectly Brer Alligator see he be drappin' off noddin' and he git up and 'low: “Well, I better be gwine on—so long!”

Mister Rabbit he say: “No. Don't go.” He kept on playin' on dat fiddle:

“Dee—dee—
Dee—diddle—dee——”

PUNISHED FOR DISCONTENT

Brer Alligator say: "I better be gwine home. I gittin' sleepy. I gone. So long!"

Mister Rabbit, he say: "No. Don't go, yonder a bed over in de cornder. Lay down dar and git yo' nap out."

Brer Alligator 'low: "He don't keer ef he do." Down he lie.

Mister Rabbit he keep on playin' on dat fiddle:

"Dee—dee—
Dee—diddle—dee——"

Brer Alligator he 'gin to snore.

Mister Rabbit, he git up easy, he do, he git a maul he done borry unbeknownst of Johnny Mingo from Johnny Mingo's cabin. He creep up to Brer Alligator, he lam him wid de maul—lam! blam!

Brer Alligator he roll outen de bed, he do, he ain't kilt but he bad hit. He roll out de tent, down de bank and into de river—ker—slosh!

Dar. Mister Rabbit he ain't got no alligator toof. He yit li'l' and least of all de beasts.

Nex' night he go li'l' far'n down de river. He set up his tent on de river bank. He put up his bed. He set on his t'ree-legged stool. He play on's fiddle:

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

“Dee—dee—
Dee—diddle—dee!
Dee—dee—
Dee—diddle—dee!”

Brer Alligator come to de tent ag'in. He knock on de tent pole. Mister Rabbit ax him in. He set and listen ag'in ter Mister Rabbit playin' twel he drap noddin' ag'in. He ketch hisse'f noddin'. He 'low he bes' be gwine. Mister Rabbit ax him: “Don't go. What's de hurry?”

Brer Alligator 'low he sleepy, done ketch hisse'f noddin', he bes' be gwine.

Mister Rabbit, he 'low: “Dar's a bed over dar, why'n' you lie down dar and git yo' nap out?”

Brer Alligator, he 'low: “Sar, I tell you, sar, I went in a tent—des like dis—las' night. I heard a soun' des like dis—las' night. I seed er li'l' man—des like you—las' night. I drap noddin'—des like dis—las' night. Dat li'l' man—des like you—ax me las' night lie on his bed. I lie on his bed. I fell snorin'—des like dis—las' night. Soon's ever I drap snorin' dat man hit me wid er maul. He li'l' mo'n like to kill me. Ef he had a hit me on my mole he would a clean out kilt me.”

PUNISHED FOR DISCONTENT

Brer Rabbit he jump^o up, clap his heels to-ge'her, he 'low: "Brer Alligator, whar yo' mole? Whar yo' mole?"

Brer Alligator he a cunnin' man hisse'f, he 'low: "Dar my mole, in de middle er my back. Ef dat li'l' man—des like you—had a hit me on my mole, he'd er kilt me sho."

Mister Rabbit he so glad dat Brer Alligator done tole him whar his mole is. He 'low: "Shoo, Brer Alligator, ev'y man look like me ain't me. Lie down yonder and git yo' nap er sleep out." Mister Rabbit he keep on playin' dat fiddle:

"Dee—dee—
Dee—diddle—dee——"

Brer Alligator he lie down, he did. Mister Rabbit he set playin' on his fiddle, he set wid his tail curled up high like a squir'l totes his'n. He play on dat fiddle:

"Dee—dee—
Dee—diddle—dee——"

D'rectly Brer Alligator fell like snorin'.

Mister Rabbit he git up easy, lay down de fiddle and de bow. Pick up de maul. Creep up to Brer Alligator, lam in de back—ker—blam!

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

Dat all Brer Alligator want. Dat lick in de middle er his back des tickle him and rouse him outen his nap of sleep. He made a grab at Mister Rabbit. Li'l' mo'n he'd a chawed him up. He did bit dat bushy tail clean off.

Mister Rabbit he been short tail ever sence. And he yit li'l' and least of all de beas'es.

Chillen, its heap better be satisfied to be de way you is, 'stidder wishin' to be what yer ain't.

XXIX

WHY BRER FOX DID NOT GET THE GOOBERS

SOON'S Brer B'ar come in sight er his house, way behime dem dark pines, he holler to his ole 'oman:

"Hullo! Dar,
Come heah,
Miss B'ar;
Goobers heah—
Rabbit dar!"

Miss B'ar she run out de cabin. She run round de dump-cyart. She look in. Des a li'l' rattlin' load of goobers in de bottom er de cyart. Goobers gone, Rabbit gone, bag gone!

Brer B'ar turn round and look. He scratch his head, he say:

"Dar!
Dat 'ar man
Done lef' me bar'."

Nex' day he hitch up de donkey to de dump-cyart and start to de patch to haul up mo'

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

goobers. His ole 'oman, she tell him: "Watch out, now, don't drap noddin' in de Big Road wid dis heah nex' load."

Dis time Brer Fox he 'low he'll git his winter pervisions by specalatin' wid Brer B'ar's load, labor and land.

Brer Fox he git a red string, he do. He tie hit round his neck same like Brer Rabbit done tie his ole 'oman's red ribbon round his neck. He git down de long bag off de nail behime his house-do'. He go to de Big Road. Same place whar Brer Rabbit done laid down—Brer Fox he lay down. He keep des as still. D'rectly heah come Brer B'ar wid 'no'her heapin' load er goobers.

De donkey he shy ag'in at de same place. Brer B'ar he git off de cyart. He look at Brer Fox, he say: "What man dis?" Brer B'ar say: "Um—hum! Maybe perhaps de same man what stole my goobers yistiddy. You got de same like red round yo' th'oot. Maybe perhaps you dead, too." He felt Brer Fox, he say: "You good weight, too. I take you to my ole 'oman, may be you'll make er good stew."

Wid dat Brer Fox think he sho gwine git good chance to git his fill er goobers.

THE
WOLF
AND
THE
LAMB



“‘Maybe perhaps you dead, too.’”

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
PRESS

FOX DID NOT GET THE GOOBERS

Brer B'ar he lif' Brer Fox by de behime legs,
he say:

“You may be dead, or may be no,
But I will make you dead fer sho'.”

Wid dat he swing Brer Fox round and round
and lam his head 'ginst de wheel er dat dump-
cyart.

Dat lick like to kilt Brer Fox. Hit all he can
do to jerk his behime legs loose from Brer B'ar
and run home thoo de dark pines.

He had de swole head some seasons from dat
lick.

Chillen, de same cunnin' trick ain't apt to work
twict.

XXX

HOW SIS WREN LOST HER PRIZE

CAP'N SPARRER, he was feeling and actin' mighty biggity, small as he was, 'caze he done by law or by jaw whipped Brer Buzzard outer his hill-top 'tater patch. He come founcin' round de fence cornder, he did, and dar he see two wrens qua'lin' de worst sort 'bout somethin' dey done find.

Whar dey find hit? Now dat's hit. What dey find? Now, dat's somethin' else.

Sence de birds done beat Sis Wren back in de fence cornders, dat's her home; and Cap'n Sparrer he did not have no business dar, mo'n dat he had no business foolin' wid fambly fusses. But Cap'n Sparrer he do love a fuss, special ef de folks what fussin' be mo' li'l' dan him. So he fly into de fuss, also.

Den dey all flutter and qua'l and jump, and jerk. Las' twixt 'em all, dey buried up de thing dey fightin' 'n' fussin' 'bout, and dey qua'l so dat nairy one'll 'low de y'o'her to scratch hit up.

HOW SIS WREN LOST HER PRIZE

Come a regular swisher-swasher, gully-washer rain; and den dey couldn't scratch it up, 'caze dem li'l' birds can't no mo' scratch deep dan dey can fly high. Nairy one er dem birds know edzactly what dat be buried dar, dough dey done quar'l so much 'bout hit.

But come spring, that thing begin to sprout and grow. Hit grow, and hit grow, hit twis' and hit turn, hit wind in a vine 'most 'crost de fiel'. Hit's most a day's journey fer dem wrens to get frum end to end of hit.

De mo' hit grow de mo' de Wrens and de Sparrers qua'l 'bout hit. All spring and summer clean into fust frost-fall dar was qua'lin' from dem wrens:

"Gi' to me!
Me! Me!"

Den Cap'n Sparrer he ansah back:

"Hit's mine!
Hit's mine!
Who vine?
Mine!"

All dat time a punkin hit was rounin' out and growin' on dat vine. Come frost and ketch dat

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

punkin on de vine and hit git yaller as gold and sweet inside as sugar.

Dar now! Nairy one er dem birds ever seen a punkin befo', but dey know dat thing dat dey do see worth money.

Sis Wren on one side er de punkin qua'lin'; Cap'n Sparrer on de y'o'her side qua'lin'.

Nairy one er dem birds can see de y'o'her 'crost de punkin, yit dey keep qua'lin'.

Cap'n Sparrer he holler:

“Hit's mine!
Mine!
Dat vine,
Hit's mine!”

Sis Wren she twitter:

“Gi' to me!
Gi' to me!
To me!
Hit 'long to me!”

Yit and still nairy one er dem birds take de punkin. Un-humm!! 'Tain't no good to git som'n' so big dat yer can't tote hit off in yo' hand or a head handkercher.

Preacher Crow, gwine by, hear de fuss, and

HOW SIS WREN LOST HER PRIZE

stop by to try to settle de 'sturbment in de settlement. Dem birds dey set de 'spute befo' him:

“De seed 'long to Wren,
Sparrer hid it—den——”

Preacher Crow he go to scratchin' letters and figgers on de ground, he 'low:

“Sis Wren got hit,
Sparrer sot hit,
Him dat can tote hit,
I gwine wrote hit,
Hit 'long to him.”

Dar! Dem li'l' birds dey flash, and dey flutter, and dey fly over dat punkin, but nairy one can tote hit. Dey den call fer law and order, and right den dey lost dey fodder. Fer des 'bout den come 'long Johnny Mingo. He 'low:

“Mornin', Brer Crow!
So long and so——”

He see dat punkin, he ain't seed none befo', he 'low:

“Mornin' up, mornin' down!
What dis heah dis nigger foun'?”

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

He thump that punkin, he 'low:

“Hit's round!
Hit's sound!
What is dis nigger found?
Hit's rich, I be bound!”

Wid dat he grab dat punkin offen de vine, put hit under his arm, and off he go 'crost de fiel'.

Sis Wren and Cap'n Sparrer des look, and Brer Crow say: “Shut de book.”

Ever sence dat punkins been growin' in season in ev'y black-man's patch, growin' rich and round.

And Mammy ended this story with the sage saying: “Chillen, don't git in a qua'l 'bout some-thin' too big fer you to han'le.”

XXXI

WHY BRER DOG BARKS

BRER RABBIT he is cunnin' and he is projectin'.

His projectin' would get him swamped in trouble ef it wan't dat his cunnin' come long and he'p him out. Li'l' mo'n' his projectin' like to got him ended up onct dough.

In de ole days Brer Dog he was des dealin' 'struction on de wile beas'es and de varmints 'caze er his whistlin'. He could whistle as fetchin' as a mockin' bird. Brer Dog he'd whistle, de beas'es dey'd come and Mister Man'd shoot 'em down.

De beas'es done all got back toge'her in de deepes' woods and dar dey skeered even to pass de day 'mongst one another. Yit dey all 'low some'in' got to be done. But who gwine do hit? Dat's hit now. Hit look like dey all gwine 'fuse de job and lose de chance.

Brer Rabbit he de leas' and de punies' beas' in de woods, yit seein' all gwine to back out, he come in. He 'low some'in' gotter be done 'bout

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

stoppin' off Brer Dog's whistlin' and he's de man what'll do hit.

He say: "Des leave de elephant and de b'ar and de deer and de res' er de big beas'es behime dem dark pines and I'll go and argufy wid Brer Dog 'bout de way he gwine on."

So heah he go, lippity skip, his tail—long den—des sailing over his back same as de squirrel's do now. He skip long, he do, twel he git to Mister Man's yard fence. He lip up and set hisse'f on de top rider er de rail fence. He prick up his years and look 'round fer to see whar Brer Dog be.

Yond' he see layin' stretched out on a sand bank.

Him'n Mister Man des been on a big hunt, and de cabin was nigh 'bout kivered wid raccoon skins, deer skins, squir'l tails and sech stretched and tacked to cure and dry.

Brer Dog done run so dat he tired and, dough he do see Brer Rabbit, he des only lif' his eye-lids fer to look at him. He done been runnin' wid Mister Man all day; he been whistlin' up de beas'es. De chune done brung 'em and Mister Man's gun done flung 'em.

Brer Rabbit he 'low ter cut dat chune off



"He pass de howdys wid Brer Dog."

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WHY BRER DOG BARKS

short. He pass de howdys wid Brer Dog and de time er de day. Den sez he: "Brer Dog, ef you ain't *too* tired, I'd like fer to ax you to whistle me a li'l' chune-song."

Brer Dog he mighty pleased fer to have a wile beas' ax him to whistle, but he don' wanter look too anxious. He say keerless dat he knows a many chunes but he don't know whicher one to give Brer Rabbit.

Brer Rabbit, he low, how 'bout dat li'l' ballet Brer Dog was whistlin' time him and him met down in de swamp 'way behime dem dark pines.

Dat make Brer Dog laugh in his insides 'case dat day Brer Dog li'l' mo'n' made hash of Brer Rabbit.

Brer Dog start on dat ballet and he whistled it clean thoo.

Brer Rabbit he ain't say nothin'.

Brer Dog 'low: "Is dat de ballet you talkin' 'bout, Brer Rabbit, or is hit dis?"

Whar-pun Brer Dog start in and whistle 'nuther ballet clean thoo.

Brer Rabbit he cough behime his hand. He ain't say nothin'.

Brer Dog he sho is pestered 'bout he git no

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

compliment of de song. He cough, and he hawk, and he say: "I b'lieve I sorter hoarse to-day, Brer Rabbit."

Brer Rabbit say: "You sho is, Brer Dog. I wan't gwine speak 'bout hit, but I done notice hit soon as you fetch up de ballet. You sho is hoarse."

Brer Dog he sho is pestered. He cl'ar his th'ot ag'in and he 'low to hisse'f dat he sho is gwine make Brer Rabbit laugh and clap his hands at de singin' dis time.

He set up on dat sand bed and he whistled—lead and foller and ballet was all in dat whistlin'.

Brer Rabbit he set on de fence wid his hand behime his year listenin'. He ain't sayin' nothin'.

Brer Dog, he 'low: "Brer Rabbit, how you like dat?"

Brer Rabbit, he say: "Well, Brer Dog, sence you ax me, I bound to tell you, some'in' ail yo' voice."

Brer Dog he good mad, he 'low: "What ail my voice? What beas' but me can and do whistle?"

Brer Rabbit, he 'low: "I ain't 'sputin' dat, Brer Dog, but your voice hit don't come out cl'ar

WHY BRER DOG BARKS

and strong and good. 'Tain't got room 'nough to come. Dat what ail yo' voice."

Brer Dog he mad.

Brer Rabbit, he 'low: "Brer Dog, hit ain't fer me to wish yo' mouf no bigger than 'tis, Brer Dog, fer yo' is done me'n' my folks 'nough harm wid hit like hit 'tis, but I tell you what I does know. Ef you go in and git Mister Man's cyarvin' knife and slice yo' mouf li'l' fa'r' back dis side—li'l' fa'r' dat side—den. De way yo' could whistle den!"

Brer Dog he lit up, he did, he run in de cabin. He snatch up de cyarvin' knife. He slit his mouf back dis side—he slit his mouf back dat side—like you see his mouf is now. Den he 'low: "I lay I make yo' laugh and clap yo' hands now when I whistle." He tried to draw up his mouf for whistlin'. He open hit, he say: "Bow! Bow! Wow!"

He barkin'. Dat was de fust time dogs ever barked but dey been barkin' ever sence. Nairy one done got his mouf drawn up to whistle sence.

Brer Dog mad, royal mad. He lip up at Brer Rabbit. He made a grab at him. He did nab off his tail. Brer Rabbit he des did 'scape wid

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

his life, let 'lone his tail gone. Rabbits been
short tail ever sence.

Nairy a dog been able to whistle sence.

Chillen, don't be swif' to take advice of visitin'
friends and neighbors.

XXXII

HOW FAIR MAID GOT THE LAST LICK

JOHNNY MINGO loved one ole mare best of all the hosses on de plantation. Hit was name Fair Maid. She been a race horse once, a regular star-gazer; but she po' now, she lean now, she no mo'n a dirt-searcher.

Ole Brer Buzzard he done turn State's eviden' dem days, and he got money. Maybe he keep hit in de ditch-bank. I dunno. He see Fair Maid gittin' po' and po' and po'er ev'y day, and he say to Johnny Mingo:

“Ef Fair Maid don't die quick,
Even her bones won't be good to pick;
Gi' her to me now
And I'll gi' you fifteen dollar, I vow.”

Johnny Mingo, he 'clar to goodness he won't sell Fair Maid fer no sech price.

Brer Buzzard he say he won't give no mo', he'll wait and git her fer nothin'. Den off he go.

“Flop! Flop!
Tarro—boy! Tarro!”

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

He wait three long days, Brer Buzzard do, den he come back to whar Johnny Mingo was plowin' Fair Maid, he holler down:

“Fung—a—lung—a—
Fung—a—lung—a!
I'll pick yo' bones fer you!
Fair Maid's mine
'Twixt three year and nine.”

Johnny Mingo he so worried out wid Brer Buzzard come 'sturbin' his mind so dat he take Fair Maid and lead her three days' journey to de deep swamp. Time he git dar he look up. Dar swing Brer Buzzard in de sky. He holler down to Johnny Mingo:

“Flop! Flop!
Tarro—boy—Tarro!
Fair Maid's mine, Mingo,
Tarro—boy—Tarro!”

Johnny Mingo he clean worried out now, but he won't sell Fair Maid, and Brer Buzzard done gone. As he go he holler:

“Fung—a—lung—a—
Fung—a—lung—a!
I lay I pick yo' bones fer you!
Fair Maid's mine
'Twixt three years and nine.”

FAIR MAID

Johnny Mingo take Fair Maid's halter and lead her three long days' journey to a holler 'twixt two hills. When he halt dar he look up to see de time by de sun. Der was Brer Buzzard hangin' like a black scythe 'ginst de blue sky. Same thing he do, flop he wings, and he holler at Johnny Mingo:

"Tarro—boy—Tarro!
Ten years and longer."

Seven long years Johnny Mingo lead Fair Maid dis way and dat all over de plantations. Ev'y time dey two stop, dar Brer Buzzard swing in full day time like a black new moon in de blue sky, hollerin' down:

"Tarro—boy—Tarro!
Ten miles and funder."

But de seven years gone and Fair Maid was clean wo' out. She drap in de fiel', Johnny Mingo see she done make her las' step. He think she done dead. He go off and leave her. Down drap Brer Buzzard, he say:

"Tarro—boy—Tarro!
Seven year and mo'
And Fair Maid's mine!"

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

He lit clost to Fair Maid. He think she done dead. He flop, he hop, he say:

“Tarro—boy—Tarro!
Fair Maid’s mine.”

Fair Maid wa’n’t quite dead, she wa’n’t; she lif’ up her behime heel, she did. She lam Brer Buzzard on de head. She li’l’ mo’n kilt him. She did kick off de top of his head; he been bal’-headed ever sence.

Chillen, don’t take no ’vantage of de po’ and de low down. Watch out ef you do. De las’ lick dey give you mought lame you.

XXXIII

SINCE WHEN MISTER BLACKBIRD WEARS RED EPAULETS

DEY was all over black in de ole days, dat how dey got dey name, Blackbirds.

But dey don't go al'a's in de flock den like dey does now. Dey was in dem days scattered 'bout, ev'y one er de fambly gwine and comin' and scratchin' fer deyse'ves. And 'twas po' luck dat dey met wid sometimes. De worst luck er all dat fell on de fambly was when Mister Blackbird, projectin' round by hisse'f, fell in wid Miss Cat.

Miss Cat al'a's did love ter hear a bird sing and al'a's did love ter see how he taste. Dem days des like now she al'a's on de look out ter ketch any bird she can, and dat day Mister Blackbird, off from his fellers, was de one dat she ketch.

Befo' Mister Blackbird know good what hit him Miss Cat had bof claws on him. Right den he clean give up and 'low dat was de las' ac' wid

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

him. But den an idee look like des drap sudden and hit him on de head. He jerk up his li'l sharp eye right up in Miss Cat's green eye and he chirp:

“Oh, Miss Cat, I beg and pray,
Don't eat me dat dirty way!”

Miss Cat she stop; she study: “What dat bird talkin' 'bout?”

Miss Cat she mighty clean. Ain't nothin' mo' clean-conditioned dan a cat is, do' she do hate water. She sho don't like fer folks talk to her 'bout bein' dirty. She 'low:

“What you say, you Blackbird?
I ain't sho' I rightly heard.”

Mister Blackbird done see dat he made Miss Cat mad, but he chirp out clar as his skeer will let him:

“I beg yo' pardon,
Grant yo' grace,
But, oh, Miss Cat
Ought wash her face!”

Miss Cat was mad, but she conclude long she got her brekkus sho in her paw, she'll take time



"Miss Cat washin'. Mr. Blackbird watchin'."

TO THE
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BLACKBIRD WEARS RED EPAULETS

to wash her face 'n' eat dat brekkus wid a clean face. She lay Mister Blackbird on de ground; she set his wings back'ards and she put her claw top er bof his wing shoulders. Den she go to lickin' and washin' her face. Round and round wid de one claw she go lickin' and washin' her face, holdin' Mister Blackbird wid y'o'her paw.

Miss Cat washin'. Mister Blackbird watchin'. D'rectly over one eye go dat claw, over one year. Mister Blackbird he holler sharp:

“Hit gwine *rain*
Soon *again!*”

He holler so quick an' sharp Miss Cat jump. Mister Blackbird he jump, too.

Dar! He done gone!

But Miss Cat's claw done scratch off bof his shoulder blades. Dey was red and raw. Dem shoulder blades is red twel yit. Mo'n dat ev'y Blackbird travels now wid de flock. All go in a gang.

Chillen, keep in with yo' kith and kin. When you 'vide up, den troubles begin.

XXXIV

THE FIRST WALKING-STICKS

OLE man Johnny Mingo done a mighty cu'us thing when he cut dat fust walkin'-stick. 'Twas in de fust times and old Johnny Mingo de onlies' black man in all de country round. He was tired out of trompin' round on business what wa'n't his'n, and he colude he'll cut a good stout stick fer to help him along.

Trees dem fust times was just as independent as quality white folks is all de time.

When Johnny Mingo cut dat walkin'-stick, dat tree didn't like sech entreatment, and hit set up a squealin' and qua'lin' like de trees does now when de wind's blowin' worries 'em.

Trees den like dey does now shelters and feeds a whole heap of varmints. All dem varmints was up and ready to take dat tree's part like niggers at de Quarter ready to fight when dey massa fight; dey all jine in de qua'l 'ginst Johnny Mingo 'caze he done cut dat stick.

THE FIRST WALKING-STICKS

De Cricket was de fust to peep out de tree to see what de matter be. She see what Johnny Mingo done; done stole a walkin'-stick offen dat tree and she holler keen:

“Thief! Thief! Thief!
Th-ie-f!
Th-ie-f!”

Some folks yits fits to Johnny Mingo and his fambly dat name Cricket give him: Thief! Thief!

Nex' Katy-did strike her green wings toge'her and dey hear fer de first time her:

“Katy didn't! Katy didn't!
Mingo did! D-i-d!”

Locust den he start up, ringin' out wo'se'n de fire-bell 'larmin' folks up to de town, he holler:

“See—him!
See—him!
See-ee-ee—
See-ee-ee—him!”

Cricket start ag'in:

“Thief! Thief!”

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

Johnny Mingo wisht wid all dat racket gwine on dat he never had cut dat hick'ry stick. He flung hit down on de ground. Off he run, he did.

De ole folks say dat des 'bout de turn er de night dat stick tried to jump back on dat tree. Hit did jump back, but den hit couldn't turn back to a limb no mo', so dar on de tree trunk hit turn to one of dese long, slim bugs what folks yit call walkin'-sticks. I dunno whe'r or not dat so. But I des know dey is de color of hick'ry sticks, dem bugs is.

But de trouble fer de trees des begun den, and dar wan't no way fer to stop hit off. Ever sence Johnny Mingo cut dat fust stick folks been cuttin' mo' sticks.

Sticks of all sorts, walkin'-sticks, fire-sticks, fishin'-poles, ox-goats, bean-poles, pea-sticks, and a many mo' sorter sticks.

Chillen, be keerful what you start in dis world. What's started keeps a-gwine. I been livin' a long time and I ain't never seed no stoppin' off place yit fer nothin'.

XXXV

BRER RABBIT TELLS ABOUT THE CIRCUS HORSES

BRER RABBIT he used to go visitin' ev'y evenin' on de gals to Miss Susan's house. De gals dey des all natchally love Brer Rabbit, but de Ole Man he do des natchally 'spise him.

De Ole Man tell Miss Susan and de gals ef ever Brer Rabbit come to his house and scratch hisse'f one mo' time, den he gwine shet de do' in Brer Rabbit's face and not never let him come in no mo'.

How Brer Rabbit gwine keep from scratchin' when de Ole Man's house was right in de swamp, and de 'skeeters was all time thick round dat house as bees round a bloomin' 'simmon tree. De ve'y next night heah start fer to see de gals Brer B'ar, Brer Fox, Brer Tarrapin and Brer Rabbit. De gals dey done gone up piece way de road for to meet Brer Rabbit fer to tell him don't he scratch a single time; 'caze if he do, de Ole Man gwine sho' shet de do' in his face.

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

Dar in de house set Brer B'ar des as easy fannin' hisse'f wid his palemeter fan, no 'skeeter come by him. Brer Fox he al'a's run de independent ticket. All he hatter do is to bresh off dem 'skeeters wid his bushy tail. Brer Tarra-pin all he got to do is to draw in his head in his shell when a 'skeeter come nigh him.

Brer Rabbit he got no palemeter fan, he got no tail, he got no shell, he got no nothin'. Dar he set on a t'ree-legged stool, feared to wiggle a year or to wink a eye lash. Dar he set wid his foots on de rung er de stool and his hands on his knees, studyin' 'bout if he des could give one scratch, 'caze dem 'skeeters was thick round him as bees round a bee gum. But de Ole Man keep a steady eye on Brer Rabbit, gwine shet de do' in his face if he do scratch a single time.

D'rectly Brer Rabbit say: "I was up to town las' Sadd'y."

De Ole Man say: "You wuz?"

Brer Rabbit say: "I sho wuz."

De Ole Man say: "What dey doin' dar?"

Brer Rabbit, he say: "Dey had a circus dar——"

De Ole Man say: "Dey did?"



"Brer Rabbit lam hisse'f in de back."

NO. 1000
ANNEXURE

THE CIRCUS HORSES

Brer Rabbit, he say: "Yassah, and dey had a parade dar, Man."

De Ole Man say: "Dey did?"

"Yassah," says Brer Rabbit, "dey had de out-blowinest calliope der dat I ever is hear, and dey had de goldenest chariot dar I ever is seed."

De Ole Man say: "Dey did?"

Brer Rabbit say: "Yassah, and dey had de calicorest hosses to dat chariot dat ever I is see. Dar was full twelve of dem calico hosses. De fust two was look like des as calico as dey could be. Dey had, de fust one, a spot right heah," Brer Rabbit he hit his leg, "and a spot right dar," Brer Rabbit lam hisse'f in de back, "and a spot right heah, and a spot right dar." Brer Rabbit hit and slap hisse'f all over. He say: "De next two dey was mo' calicorerer dan de fust two, dey had a spot right heah, and a spot right dar, and a spot right heah and a spot right dar. And de next two dey was yet mo' calicorerer dan——"

Well, time Brer Rabbit done tole de Ole Man 'bout all dem twelve hosses he was good scratched all over.

Chillen, it don't so much matter what you do as how you do it.

XXXVI

WHY MISS BAT NEVER SINGS

IN de ole days Miss Bat could outsing all de birds. She lost her voice long er bein' proud, too proud. She useter sing all songs. All she hatter do is des to say, "click," like a music-box do, and she'd turn loose one tune and take hold of ano'her.

De birds all come flockin' by Mister Man's house to hear Miss Bat sing. Ef she have los' her fea'hers, still an' yit dey gwine pay dey 'spec's ter Miss Bat 'caze of her fine singin'.

Fiel' Lark come by fust, des as Miss Bat was singin':

"Laziness kill you! Laziness kill you!
Too—ra—loo! Too—ra—lo-o-o!"

Fiel' Lark find dat sech a pretty song dat it jine in de chorus.

Foolish Miss Bat she git mad at Fiel' Lark fer jinin' in, and she fling dat song outer her mouf like she done fling off fea'hers befo'. Den

WHY MISS BAT NEVER SINGS

Fiel' Lark it fly on, feelin' free to sing de song and de chorus, too, sence Miss Bat done cast it off her tongue.

Den Sparrer come by. Miss Bat was singin' :

“Twee—ree! Twee—ree!
Te! Te! Te! Te!”

Sparrer she dip in wid de ballet. Miss Bat she shoot dat song offen her tongue also. Sparrer he go 'long singin' de chune and de ballet, also; done feel free now to take dat song for his own.

Swaller he flutter by den; he dash dis way, dash dat way. As he come nigh Miss Bat she singin' :

“Come, Summer, come along,
Sing-song, sing-a-song!”

Miss Bat had de lead and Swaller come in wid de foller. Miss Bat she cast dat song offen her bill. She won't sing airy chune dat airy y'o'her bird kin carry. Swaller he dash on carryin' de lead and de foller, also.

Mockin' Bird she come by. She be des as light in her singin', but Miss Bat was singin' lighter. She sing :

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

“Dixie! Dixie!
Dixie! Do!
Never mind de wedder,
So de wind don’t blow.”

De Mockin’ Bird she reel dat song off:

“Dixie! Dixie!
Dixie! Do!
Never mind de wedder,
So de wind don’t blow.
Blow! Blow!
Blow-o-o-o-o-o!”

Den Miss Bat, she sing:

“Young Master! Young Miss!
Who kiss? Who kiss?
Kiss me! Kiss me!
Kiss me! Kiss me!”

Mockin’ Bird track and find dat chune:

“Young! Young!
Young Master! Young Miss!
Who kiss? Who kiss? Who kiss?
Me! Me! Kiss me!
Me! Me! Me!”

Den de Miss Bat go it on her las’ song:

“Day’s breakin’, hoe-cake’s bakin’!
Mammy, Mammy, put on de lead!

WHY MISS BAT NEVER SINGS

Mammy gwine make some shortnin' bread!
Shortnin' bread!
Oh, la, Nigger, I thought you was dead,
Heah you is reachin' fer shortnin' bread!"

Miss Mockin' Bird she catch dat song on de bounce des like hit was her own.

Dat was de las'. Miss Bat done flung ev'y song offen her bill forever. De other birds done pick all dem songs up, dey has.

Chillen, right now Miss Bat sets all day long in de darkes' cornder er Mister Man's loft. Chillen, she des as quiet as a mouse. Still and ugly she is. Night comes on and she scoots out whilst de rest er de birds is in. She shoots and scoots about some li'l'. Ef you ketch her she squeaks. She des squeaks:

"Che! Che! Che!"

Chillen, 'twon't do to be too proud. Pride 'bleeged to git a fall.

XXXVII

HOW BRER DEER GOT A WHITE FACE

IN de fust times Brer Deer wa'n't a pale face man like he is now. Dem days he had as good a black face on him as anybody could wish to see.

One day, des about bird-matin' season, in de spring er de year, he had shed his horns and he was loungin' round in de deep woods behime dem dark pines, waitin' fer 'em ter grow, when he come upon Brer Rabbit.

Brer Rabbit don't know Brer Deer widout dem big horns, and he jump and run and holler, "What strange man is dat?"

Dat do make Brer Deer laugh, 'caze he sech a skeery man hisse'f dat he tickle fer to see somebody skeerder dan him. Brer Deer 'low:

"Hello, Brer Rabbit,
You run mighty light,
You look in a fright,
And you skeered 'bout right!"

HOW BRER DEER GOT A WHITE FACE

Brer Rabbit he mad at Brer Deer laughin' at him, and he do wisht dat he could git even wid Brer Deer fer dat laughin' at him. Brer Rabbit he turn round, he do, and look at Brer Deer right studyin'-a-fied; he 'low:

"I got no time to talk to you,
I'm gwine fer sweetness now, fer true;
Sweet as sugar, rich as wine—
But don't you ask me whar I gwine!"

Brer Deer he love sweetness hisse'f and dat sorter talk make his mouf water. He 'low:

"Brer Rabbit, please, sah, stop and stay,
I 'ants somethin' sweet to-day!
Don't pass so swiftly when us meet—
I 'ants a passel somethin' sweet!"

Brer Rabbit he stop a minute. He set right down in de big road cross-legged like a banjo picker. He sing:

"May be, Mo' Bee!
Rob Bee! Oh!
A bee! Po' Bee!
Be you po'—
Sweetness in dat holler tree,
Dat dar sweetness ain't fer me.
You des can try—and den you see!"

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

Brer Rabbit he sit in de road and he sing so jobly dat he make Brer Deer's mouf water mo'n'mo' fer somethin' sweet. Heah Brer Rabbit set singin' again:

“May be! Po' Bee!

You be po'—

Rob Bee and he

Do you so!

Sweet as sugar, rich as wine,

Tell me, Brer Deer, is you gwine?

I give it you ef hit be mine,

Right dar in dat holler tree

Somethin' sweet you surely see,

I give hit you ef hit be mine—

Good-bye, honey, fer I'm gwine!”

Wid dat Brer Rabbit he lit out, he did. Ole Brer Deer he got to dat holler tree, sho 'nough, he did. Chillen, dat holler tree was a bee-tree!

No mo' sense had ole Brer Deer, had he, dan to go peepin' in dat tree. Sho 'nough when he peep in dat tree he smell honey. Sho 'nough in dat holler tree he see honey—hit drippin' down dat holler tree, drap by drap, down dat hole drap by drap, yeller as gole.

Ole Brer Deer he lick out his tongue. He 'low:

“Honey in dat holler wood,

Honey tas'e so very good!”

THE
BIG-HEAD



"He got de big-head all in a minute."

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HOW BRER DEER GOT A WHITE FACE

He lick some mo'. Hit come too slow. Brer Deer he push his whole head in dat holler tree. De las' word de wile wood heah from ole Brer Deer as his head go in dat holler tree was dis:

"Drops as yaller as sunshine,
Richer dan de punkin vine!
Honey! I will call it mine,
Sweet as sugar, rich as wine!"

Fudder in go his head. Den down come de bees, thick as you please! Don't they sting? No mo' singin' fer old Brer Deer. He got de big-head all in a minute. His head so swole up he couldn't pull it out. Des den heah come Brer Rabbit lopin' back. Dar he see Brer Deer wid his head stuck fas' in de holler tree.

Brer Rabbit he cut a shine behime Brer Deer's back, he 'low behime his hand:

"You laugh at me fus', I laugh at you las',
Hello, Brer Deer, yo' laughin' time pass."

Den Brer Rabbit he run scootin' by Brer Deer, he holler out loud:

"Take yo' head out de holler hole.
King George dogs are barkin' bole!
Dar! Brer Deer, you better run,
I see 'em comin' 'gainst de sun!"

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

Brer Deer hearin' King George's dogs are a comin' he skeered up so bad dat he give his head a awful jerk—out hit come!

But, dar! Dat awful jerk done strip his face off him, his head lef' red and raw.

Dar! You ax me did hit heal up? Um—hum! Somethin' happen 'fo' de healin', but when his face did heal up, hit heal up tee-total white. Brer Deer got a white face yit.

Chillen, t'won't do to hone atter too much sweetness; ef rank sweetness don't sour on you one way 'twill 'nother.

XXXVIII

HOW MISTER REDBIRD GOT HIS COLOR

AWAY back days de redbird was des as plain a color er grey as de dove is today. He could hide hisse'f as commodious in de dry grass and de withered weeds des as good as any grey bird can do. He wa'n't dem days sech a red-rose, fiery bird as he is now.

He wan't den a love-sign bird as he is now.

How he a love-sign bird? Why ef a gal see a redbird flutterin' round de yard or fiel's, and ef she don't make no 'miration, don't say no word 'bout she done seed dat redbird, den dat's a sho sign dat she gwine see her sweetheart 'fo' Sadd'y night. Dat sign don't fail—ef de gal don't make no 'miration.

One time in bird-matin' season Mister Redbird done chose fer his mate er li'l' bird grey all over like him; and him'n her was singin' behime dem dark pines, singin' toge'her, and flyin' apart and singin' toge'her like birds does do, when des den Mister Redbird heard sech a

runnin' and a breakin' twigs 'way in de deep fur woods. Over dar he fly to see what all dat fuss do be. Den he see what de matter be.

Brer Deer done des pull his head out de honey-hole whar Brer Rabbit made him stick it in, and dar go Brer Deer runnin' thoo de wile woods, ain't see whar he be gwine, his face all skint red an' raw and drippin' blood.

Mister Redbird he got a mighty tender trimblin' heart and he feel so 'stressus fer Brer Deer dat he fly right up to Brer Deer; and up and down Brer Deer's face he fly wipin' de blood offer Brer Deer's face wid his wings. Up and down he flutter, wipin' Brer Deer's face, twel d'rectly he git de blood staunch up mos' good as if somebody had a-wiped off his face wid cobwebs.

Blood don't drip in Brer Deer's eyes no mo', and Brer Deer can see de way cl'ar to git home.

But dar!

When Mister Redbird done get thoo wipin' off Brer Deer's face wid his wings, he didn't have a grey feather on him. He was des tee-total blood-red all over. He was des 'mersed in blood, Mister Redbird was.

MISTER REDBIRD

He been red ever sence. He's de reddes' thing
dat goes, des as red as any rose.

Chillen, de gracious giver mo'n apt to git a
savin' grace.

XXXIX

BRER RABBIT'S TRICK SAVES THE DEER

BRER RABBIT he mought er been sorry 'bout dat white face he done got Brer Deer, I dunno. Brer Rabbit he quick to be cunnin', but he ain't quick to be sorry.

But nummine, whe'r he be sorry er no, hit come to pass on one day Brer Rabbit was settin' easy at his house-do'. All de woods was right den full er barkin' and bayin', but Brer Rabbit he knowd dem was deer-hounds on de deer-run, and he ain't 'sturbed in his min', 'caze he know ef a deer-hound, or fox-hound jump a rabbit, he gwine git fer hit nothin' but de promise lick wid his master's whip.

So he set easy in his do'. D'rectly he hear sech a runnin' and a breakin' er dry twigs and heah come Brer Deer. He des got on his fresh horns den; he look mighty fine, but he don't feel brave in his min', 'caze de dogs and de hunters is nighin'.

Braille text consisting of several lines of dots in the upper right corner of the page.



14 "Is you see a deer go by heah?"

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RABBIT'S TRICK SAVES THE DEER

Brer Rabbit, he say:

“So long, Brer Deer, so long—
What’s yer hurry?
What’s yer worry?”

Brer Deer pant:

“Brer Rabbit, I can’t tarry.
I bedoubt I see tomorry;
Brer Rabbit, don’t stay me,
Dey ’bout to way-lay me!”

Brer Rabbit, he ’low:

“Brer Deer, say so, you,
And I’ll stop man and dogs, too!”

Men and dogs nighin’. Brer Deer pant:

“So do, so do!
I’ll much bethank you.”

Den off go Brer Deer to de river. He scarce hope to git dar, de hounds sound so nigh. Soon’s ever Brer Deer gone on, Brer Rabbit he scoot out in de deer-run, and dar he set facin’ de trail wid his eyes popped out like he skeered to death.

Heah come de lead hound, give a tremendous bound. Dar! He see Brer Rabbit. He ain’t

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

never brought a big trail to so small a figger befo', he 'stonish, shame, and mo'. De lead hunter come up. Dar! He see Brer Rabbit. He ain't never see dat deer hound trail a har' befo', and he also so 'stonish, shame, good fooled, and mo'.

De rest er de hunters all come up. Dey all stop and look. Dey say:

“Is all dis fuss heah
Been 'bout dat little man dar?”

De lead dog say ter Brer Rabbit:

“Li'l man settin' dar,
Is you see a deer go by heah?”

Brer Rabbit he make out he trimblin', he say:

“Who? Me? Deer?
I seed nothin' heah
But a man wid er cheer
On his head gwine by.
He pass dis way—Hi?”

All de chase scatter wile over de woods. Come back atter a time and de lead dog say:

“Brer Rabbit, say,
How dat man look to-day
Wid a cheer on his head,
Des like you said?”

RABBIT'S TRICK SAVES THE DEER

Brer Rabbit make like he trimblin' mo', he say: "He was mos' colored grey, but his face was right rally snow-white and dat cheer on his head was des like I said. Hit had a long prong right heah, dat very same cheer, a prong right heah, and a prong right dere, and a prong right heah, and a prong right dere——"

De lead dog say: "La!

"Brer Rabbit, you
Done fool us fer true;
Dat ain't no man wid a cheer.
Dat was Brer Deer—
He got his new horns on,
And now he gone on."

He was gone on, too. He done swim de river some several times and done wash out his trail.

Chillen, when you start atter big things, don't let no li'l' thing stop you on de trail.

XL

THE HONEST DOVE AND THE DISHONEST PARTRIDGE

ONE thing no man don't know, and dat is how far cunnin' can go. Hit leaves fleetness and slowness, strongness and weakness, all travellin' on de big road, while hit takes the nigh-cut and gits to de feas' fust.

In de ole days Dove and Part'idge picked a qua'l; 'twas de same ole 'sputement 'twixt cunnin' and 'countable. Hit seemed a fair chance fer Sis Dove to win. She had a pa'r of wings no bird could outfly. She mons'ous smart in larnin'; but Part'idge, she been cunnin' sence she been born. She been all time pert and fat and sassy. De qua'l went sorter so:

Part'idge, she 'low dat Dove is mighty greedy to talk 'bout de grains what drap out de year, and Dove so rich, too; got a lien on all de corn-craps in de wo'ld.

Dove say yes, she is got crap liens a plenty, and she sho' got a right to fatten on all de fiel's in de wo'ld 'caze she de fust one in de wo'ld to

THE DOVE AND THE PARTRIDGE

start corn-plantin', 'caze she plant de first grain er corn ever was plant in de wo'ld, Dove did.

Part'idge say she bless her stars she ain't 'bleeged to work in no fiel'; she sets in de house and Bob White fetches her rations home at night.

Dove say she is done hear all de Part'idges sing day in and day out:

“Bob! Bob White!
Corn ripe?
Not quite.
Dog bite?
Yas, at night.”

Part'idge 'low dat's a fib folks tellin' on Mister Part'idge 'bout him axin' is folks' corn ripe and do folks' dog bite.

Dove say she don't know so good 'bout dat, any how she 'low dar won't be no plantin' er corn nex' year.

Part'idge say: “How! How come?”

Dove say she been studyin' as how she'll try livin' off starvin' awhile like some other folks does.

Part'idge say folks'll talk 'bout dat, dey'll say: “How comes Sis Dove so rich and yit won't have no corn planted dis year?”

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

Dove feel sorter jubious den, but she 'low: "Dem what don't plant is fatter den dem what does."

Part'idge 'low, keerless dat, well, ef Miss Dove willin' to eat pickin's and leavin's, den she maybe mought git on 'dout de usual crib full.

Dove 'low: "So den, pickin' and stealin' he'ps fum starvin'."

Part'idge say she ain't speak de word "stealin'." But she say, ef you come to starvin', she like to know who can live offer starvin' longer dan she can.

Dove she is too high minded to let eggin' pass, so she git Preacher Crow to draw up a 'greement 'twixt her and de Part'idge, to see which one can starve de longes' day.

Part'idge say she'll choose de broom-sedge fiel' to stay to starve in, fer ev'y bird knows de heavies' sedge-fiel' in de world don't bear nothin' to eat. Part'idge say she wisht she could take a high stand to starve in de sight of all de birds, but she say she des a po' creeter, 'caze of her short legs and short-flight wings, and so she'll hatter take a low seat.

Dove, she say, long as she do b'long to a race of high-flyers 'mongst de birds, she'll choose a

THE DOVE AND THE PARTRIDGE

high seat in sight of all de birds, which will be watchin' to see fair play. Den Dove she take a perch on de top-most rider of a ten-rail-stake-and-rider-worm fence.

Fust day of de starvin' match, Dove call out cl'ar at break of day:

“Coo—coo-oo-oo-oo—
I starve-ve-ve
De longes' day!”

Part'idge whistle from de sedge fiel':

“Riddle, riddle, ray!
I starve de longes' day!”

Nex' day Dove feel sorter po'ly, 'caze she ain't eat none day nor night, but she raise up her head and coo:

“Coo-oo-o-o-o-o—
Who-o—
Starve de longes' day?”

Now Part'idge al'a's could scoot thoo de sedge and nobody see her gwine. She slip in de sedge fiel' dis way and dat way; de sedge fiel' jines de hack-berry hedge on one side and de corn patch on de y'o'her. Nobody can't see what she do dar, so second day she whistle lively as de fust:

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

“Riddle, riddle, ray!
I starve de longes’ day!”

‘Third day of starvin’, early in de mornin’,
Dove des can coo so low:

“Coo-o—
Who—Who-o-o—”

Den she keel over dead off de high fence. De
birds, dey all give de word as Sis Dove she sho
did ac’ fair.

Third day Part’idge she flew out de sedge fiel’
lively as ever and whistle:

“Riddle, riddle, ray!
I starve de longes’ day!”

De birds des all wag der heads; dey say dey
don’t know so good what Part’idge done. Dey
wag dey heads, but dat Part’idge she yit fat and
sassy.

Chillen, ’twon’t do fer fine folks ter git into
’sputes wid low-livin’ cunnin’ creeters.

XLI

WHY BRER BUZZARD'S HEAD IS BALD

MISS SUSAN she done gin out de news dat she gwine give a cake-walk ter de settlement. All de neighborhood dey been fer de longes' a gittin' ready fer dat cake-walk.

Brer Rabbit he done borry one er ole Miss Rabbit's smuff breshes, and done polish up his front teef, bof rows, twel dey shine.

Brer Possum he try to git a pleasin' grin on him; he don't study 'bout nothin' but gwine to dat cake-walk, he don't.

Miss Mole she des rub her pink hands toge'her, rub her pink hands and turn up her nose at ev'ythin', yit she gwine to dat cake-walk, ef de trap spar' her.

Mister Lizard he been fer a season doin' nothin' but tryin' on new clothes, sleek new cloze of ev'y color; he 'low to be de best dressed man dar.

Brer Buzzard, dough, he do 'low ter hab de

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

most stylishes' head dat dar is gwine to be dar. He wan't bal'-headed den, not he. He had as good a head er ha'r as anybody dem days. Also he done kep' his ha'r in wrops a mont' er mo', ever sence dey done fust tell er dat cake-walk.

Jedge Peacock he des all de time stand in de sun and study: Shall he go, or not go? 'Caze look like to him dat gwine be de mos' likely way fer him to sho' off dem rusty feet er his'n cake-walkin'—but den, shoo, he ain't gwine to git missed er dat tea supper no how.

Ev'y minute Brer B'ar he look at his watch, he don't want er by no means be late.

Ev'ybody meetin' ev'ybody else in de Big Road and tellin' dem how many shoats Miss Susan done have ole Johnny Mingo kill, and how many cakes she done have old Aunt Citty fer to bake.

Mon! De way Miss Susan's house look dat night! Pine torches was ev'ywhar in dat house. Dey was stickin' and burnin' in ev'y knot-hole. De torches was tied wid plow lines to de cornders of de fireboard. Dat light wood was blazin'!

Mon! 'Twas a sight in dat house! Brer Rabbit he grin so as to show off bof rows of toofes. Brer Possum try to smile. Miss Mole, she could see den, was wavin' her pink hands and lookin'



"He wan't bal'-headed den, not he."

THE
AMERICAN

WHY BRER BUZZARD'S HEAD IS BALD

ev'ywhar. Mister Lizard he so fine dress dat his cloze change color in de light and in de dark.

But of all—Brer Buzzard he was de fines' lookin' man dar. His head been so good wrop, and wrop so long time, dat now when hit was turnt loose and good grease hit look like hit would fill a half bushel medjure—and den run over! Sech a head! Ev'ybody in de house was makin' a gre't 'miration over dat head er ha'r.

I wisht you could a seed ole Brer Buzzard dat night. He des lean keerless like 'ginst de side er de house, right under de bigges' blazin' light-wood torch dat dar was in dat house. Mon! When dat light fell right on his head you could see de goose grease shine on ev'y stran' er ha'r dat he had.

Miss Susan she had des set de row fer to begin dey walkin' when, Lawsy massy-me, dar broke out sech a light, sech a blaze as never was! Hit look like forked lightnin' done bust loose. Hit sound like a whole kettle er fish fryin'. De whole endurin' place was lit up. Somebody holler, "Fire!" Ev'ybody holler, "Fire!"

Den sech a tumblin' and fallin' one over de y'o'her, and all over each!

De bright light put out Sis Mole's eyes. She

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

can't see a wink twel yit. Brer B'ar he fell midst de flo' and bust his watch. He ain't yit able to find de time to wake up fum his winter's nap. Brer Possum, he fell 'crost Mister Ground Lizard, and Mister Ground Lizard in de scuffle turn and bit him, and dat set him ter laughin'. Old Brer Possum's a laughin' twel yit, and hit's truf, ef a ground lizard do bit a person, twel yit, dat's gwine make dat person a all-the-year-round giggler, let 'lone a possum.

Mon! What you reckon was de matter? Ole Brer Buzzard's head er ha'r done cotch er fire fum a spark droppin' off dat torch.

Mon! Didn't hit blaze! Hit burnt all his ha'r off. He bal'-head ever sence.

Chillen, ef you try to outshine yo' friends and neighbors, you may git so bright you git burnt up.

XLII

MISS REDBIRD

DAT day when Mister Redbird done got Brer Deer sorter holped up, dat day Brer Deer got his face skint white, Mister Redbird done got hisse'f a tee-total red all over. Red as blood 'caze he been merged in blood by wipin' off Brer Deer's bleedin' face. Back thoo de wile woods he fly to sing ag'in wid his mate.

But dat li'l' grey bird what he done lef' dar didn't know dat red color. He lef' her grey. He come back red. 'Twan't no wonder she fly off ev'y time he come nigh. She fly away and she sing at him:

“Cha—Cha—Cha!
Go 'way—'way!”

Mister Redbird he was clean out-done. He can't git Miss Redbird to stay still long 'nough to hear what he got to say fer hisse'f. She jest flutter off and she sing:

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

“Cha—Cha—Cha—
Go 'way!
I don't know you!
I don't know you!
Who you? Who you?
Who you?”

He keep tryin' to tell her he's her true mate,
but she flutter and she sing:

“No, no, no—
(Des so.)
You too red,
Wings, breast and head.
'Way! 'Way! 'Way!”

Den to make things worse for Mister Redbird,
heah out de woods flash de Killdee' and holler,
like she do holler, at Mister Redbird:

“Did you kill Deer?
Kill Deer? Kill Deer?”

Dar, now Redbird he done help Brer Deer and
yit he 'cused er bein' de one what kilt him, er
nigh kilt him.

But Mister Redbird bound to 'splain. He pes-
tered but he keep right atter Miss Redbird. He
git nigh 'nough to hol' her; he flash his wing
'ginst her; he dash his red breast 'ginst her; dey

MISS REDBIRD

two chase and race thoo de wile woods. When dey come to the aidge er de pond behime dem dark pines, dey stop to ketch breaif. Dey look in dat pond.

Dar!

Now Mister Redbird done tap her wid his fresh-dyed red wing, breas' and tail, and she nigh 'bout red as he is. But not quite. She got some grey fea'hers left. But she see she like 'nough him fer to make up dey qua'l. So dey set on a limb and sing toge'her ag'in.

But right now hit make Mister Redbird mad for de Killdee' to come hollerin' out de swamp at him:

“Kill Deer! Kill Deer!
Kill Deer!”

Chillen, don't change yo' ways whilst you 'way from home if you want a welcome when you git back dar.

XLIII

HOW BRER RABBIT GOT IN THE WATER AND OUT AGAIN

BRER RABBIT li'l' mo'n got lost er his life onct, by lettin' Brer Hawk pen him up. He 'low he can't stand no mo' poundin' up like dat. Fire or water, ruther dan have Brer Hawk pen him up ag'in, so he lopin' 'long de Big Road one day when he hear Brer Hawk behime him shriekin':

"I'd ruther eat rabbit
Dan chicken—
Chicken!"

Brer Rabbit didn't take time to even lick his left behime foot, dough he know ef he do dat de chaser won't git at him dat race. Brer Rabbit he des lit out, he did.

Far over in de 'midst of de fiel' mos' as clean as a man's hand, he seen one li'l' mound look like slim weeds. He think may be a brier patch beyont it. He make fer it.

IN AND OUT AGAIN

Brer Hawk right behime him hollerin':

"I'd ruther eat rabbit
Dan chicken!"

Brer Hawk 'bout to strike his claws in de middle of Brer Rabbit's back when Brer Rabbit give one long lippity—jump—and— Ker slosh! A wash!

Brer Rabbit done jump clean thoo de fringe er slim weeds and done lit head fo'mos' right into a hoss-pond. Brer Rabbit he don't love water neither. He come up sputterin' and spittin'.

Brer Hawk he dart nigh 'nough to say:

"Brer Rabbit, I git yer nex' time.
I like now to see yer climb!"

Now dat's hit. Brer Rabbit he want to climb out, he do, but Brer Hawk flyin' high know mo' 'bout dat hoss-pond dan Brer Rabbit do. De water done sunk low in de summertime dry drought and de side of dat pond was slick and sweatin' wet all de day. Dar wa'n't no climb out fer Brer Rabbit. He des do manage to keep his head outer dat water, he say:

"No mo' water, but fire nex' time;
Wisht ter goodness I could climb!"

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

Hot as hit was wid de high-topped June, Mister Rabbit can des make out to sing dat weakly tune. His teef des knockin' 'ginst his gums in his head. He nigh 'bout frozen to death.

D'rectly he hear somethin' trompin' thoo de weeds, comin' ter de pond. Brer Rabbit keep right still, and listen. Hit's Goat comin'.

Goat look in dis side er de pond, look in dat side er de pond. He want ter make his once a year drink, but he feared ef he lean to drink he'll slip in. He ain't seen Brer Rabbit.

Brer Rabbit des kin keep his head up, he say:

“Wisht ter goodness I could climb!
Mornin', Goat, you take a float?”

Brer Goat he 'stonish, he say:

“Brer Rabbit, what doin' dar?
I see years and eyes, but no ha'r.”

Brer Rabbit he most wo' out, but he able to try a trick; he ansah up gaily:

“Hit's hot and dry,
But I des try
Ef I can keep cool.
It's de good ole rule.”

THE
SUN



"Brer Rabbit shake hisse'f in de sun."

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IN AND OUT AGAIN

Goat studyin' whe'r ter b'lieve him or no, when Brer Rabbit 'gin ter talk 'bout what a fine pa'r o' horns Goat got. He 'low dey li'l' mo'n touch de sky. But he say, "You look too dry, des jump in and try a good coolin' down and a swim round and round."

Goat ain't use to havin' folks po' 'lasses down his year and it sound mighty jobly to him. Brer Rabbit gittin' weaklier and weaklier. He seed Goat chewin' an' chewin, but he don't know what he studyin' 'bout. He say:

"You better come try,
Fer hit's sho' hot an' dry."

Ker-blip! 'Fo' Brer Rabbit knowed what Goat studyin' 'bout he done jump right in de pond. De wash and de swash of dat jump li'l' mo'n like to drown Brer Rabbit out right. He des managed to slip on de Goat's back and climb out on his horns.

Brer Rabbit shake hisse'f in de sun; he roll over and over to dry hisse'f. Des 'fo' he lit off 'crost de fiel' he holler to Goat:

"I tole yer, Goat,
To try to float,
And yo' horns, dey was high

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

As to reach to de sky,
So long, and by—by.”

He lef' Goat kickin' in dat pond and chilled
to de bone dough 'twas dry drouth.

Chillen, don't you listen to deceivin' flatterin'
words. Hit mo'n apt to git you in trouble.

XLIV

CHUCK-WILL'S-WIDOW'S SECRET

DAT li'l' Chuck-will's-widder, dat li'l' brown bird, she's tellin' a sec'et, she is. But she ain't tellin' all of it. And you mind out, a sec'et dat's half tole is wo'se 'n a sec'et dat ain't tole at all. Dis is how 'twas.

Johnny Mingo he al'a's was po', and his folks was po', and dey al'a's gwine to be po'. Dey is po' 'caze dey is al'a's lookin' fer some'in' to come up ter make 'em rich. Nothin' gwine come up. Somethin' gwine stay down. What gwine stay down? Dat what's put down. De tale of it go sorter so:

Long days ago Johnny Mingo, he was a rale ole Af'ica man, he was, he got tired belongin' to his ole massa, and he 'low, he did, to get tog'her 'nough money fer to buy hisse'f—call hisse'f free. He work, and he work, and he don't never shirk. But he don't get toge'her no money. End er de year come and he had feed and cloze, but no money to show.

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

Las' he git a roguish mind on him. Den he 'gun to spy and spy, and he 'gun to watch and find out whar his massa's money-chist do be. He 'low he'll des slip out his own worth and weight er gole out er dat money-chist—ef no mo'.

One night des 'twixt daylight and dark, when he done find out whar dat money-chist do be, he slip in and dip out a lot er gole out dat chist. Nobody was watchin'; he took his head handkercher off and he filled hit clean full ef gole, and he tie hit up by de fo' cornders. His head handkercher offen his head, his ole grey wool stand up on top his head, and Johnny Mingo he study 'bout he a free man den.

Off he go wid dat handkercher er gole. Dat all he got to tote hit in, 'caze 'fo' Coun' Surrender niggers wan't 'lowed no pockets in dey cloze. White folks say pockets in dey cloze 'd make niggers roguish. De fust thing niggers done when dey hear Coun' Surrender was to turn dey cloze wrong side out'ards and go puttin' pockets in.

Johnny Mingo hung dat handkercher on de end his crook-neck hick'ry stick, and dart off fas' as he can to de swamp, to hide dat gole twel time when folks done fergit to be lookin' fer hit.

CHUCK-WILL'S-WIDOW'S SECRET

Gwine to'ard de swamp he go by his house and pick up his three-legged iron pot. Now he 'low:

“Oho!
Johnny Mingo
Be a free man,
I know.”

He done stole gole, and nobody don't know he done stole gole. But no sooner he strike de swamp dan he heard de ole Bull-frog start up:

“You stole!
You stole!
You stole!
You stole!”

Dat skeer Johnny Mingo nigh to death. He been study 'bout nobody know he done stole, and now de news done tole. He stan' still and listen. Sho 'nough Mister Bull-frog keep hollerin':

“You stole!
You stole!”

Hit was mo'n Johnny Mingo could stand. He stop midway de swamp, he 'low:

“Watch out, Bull-frog,
What you tole!
Ef I steal, what did I stole?”

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

Dat didn't set Mister Bull-frog back nairy bit. Hit didn't so much as make him take in de slack er his voice. He des give Johnny Mingo de ansah:

“Pot—er—gole!
Pot—er—gole!”

Dar! Johnny Mingo's knees clean give out at dat. He stop right whar he be and fix to bury dat gole right dar whar he be. He dig a hole deep, deep, deep. He pour de gole in de pot. He bury dat pot-er-gole deep, deep, deep. Soon as he pour out dat gole, he tie his handkercher on his head agin. Dar! He free man no mo', handkercher on his head same as befo'. He stomp fresh dirt over dat hole; he rake leaves over de place wid his fingers. Den Johnny Mingo, he 'low:

“Nobody can't find dat gole,
Ef Bull-frog is done tole
Who stole! Who stole!”

Out de swamp he go, ole Johnny Mingo. Time he git to his house he sorter git over his skeer, and he study 'bout what spot did he hide dat gole. He ain't blaze no tree; he ain't turn no

CHUCK-WILL'S-WIDOW'S SECRET

stone; he ain't break no limb; he mo'n apt not ever to find dat spot. Come nex' day he go to de swamp fer ter see can he fin' dat spot or no. Dar he stand still and study:

"I don't know whe'r or not
I ever find dat pot!"

Des den a li'l' brown bird on a log down in de dry leaves holler up and tell Johnny Mingo whar dat gole be. She sing:

"'Twixt de elm and de white oak!
'Twixt de elm and de white oak."

But when Johnny Mingo look round to choose de spot to dig dar he see so many elms and so many white-oaks. Yonder elm, dar white-oak, dar elm, yonder white-oak! He don't know 'bout which-a-one de Chuck-will's-widder spoke. He don't dig, he des stand and study 'bout *whar* to dig. He got dem studyin' ways twel yit, and mo'n dat, all his folks got 'em also. Stand and study. When you see a lazy nigger right now, he's studyin' 'bout dat pot-er-gole—study dat he'll find it some day, den he won't hatter work no mo'.

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

'Twel yit de Frog and de Chuck-will's-widder
keep up tellin' dat tale. Mister Bull-frog holler:

"You stole!
Pot—er—gole!
You stole!
Pot—er—gole!"

Den if you listen you hear de Chuck-will's-
widder tell whar Johnny Mingo hide dat pot-er-
gole.

"'Twixt de elm and de white oak!
'Twixt de elm and de white oak."

Chillen, 'taint wise to trus' to waitin' to git
wealth.

XLV

HOW FOLKS LEARNED TO ROAST POSSUM

HIT'S a wonder to me de critters ain't larnt to keep a distrust'us mind 'bout Brer Rabbit. He been foolin' 'em and foolin' 'em twel hit look like dey mought know his ways by now.

One sunny day, long days ago, befo' folks had larnt how to make rabbit-hash, or how to roast er possum either, Brer Rabbit was lyin' stretched on de top er Miss Susan's hen-house sunnin' hisse'f. He had his shoulders drawed up high and his head all kivered up under his fore-legs, his fore-paws crost desso.

D'rectly Brer Possum come by. He stop. He look. He see Brer Rabbit but he see no head. He lope round on de y'o'her side de hen-house. He see Brer Rabbit, but he don't see no head. He stop short, he say :

“Brer Rabbit dead,
He got no head.”

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

Brer Rabbit he don't move, he say:

“Naw, I ain't dead,
Ef I got no head.”

Brer Possum he listen good, he say:

“What Brer Rabbit said?
Yit he got no head.”

Brer Rabbit don't move, he des 'low to Brer Possum dat he des lyin' dar restin' and sunnin' hisse'f whilst his ole 'oman at de home-house is pickin', greasin' and fresh wroppin' his head.

Brer Possum he grin from year to year. He say:

“Brer Rabbit, dat so?
Hit's er all day job and mo'
Wid my ole 'oman and me
To git my head wrop—I see!”

Brer Rabbit he don't move a bit, he make ansah:

“May be! May be!
What's dat to me?”

Brer Possum he don't wait fer no word mo'. Him go off shamblin' and smilin'; nothin' suit



"She distrust's 'bout Brer Rabbit's tricks."

ROAST POSSUM

him better 'n him be restin', sunnin' hisse'f, and his ole 'oman settin' pickin', combin', greasin', and fresh wroppin' his head. He run home dat lopin' run, draggin' his behime foots like mos' half his leg hittin' de groun' and lyin' out in a track at ever step like Possum do go.

When he git home he holler to his ole 'oman to git out de best new home-spun cotton-cord fer to wrop his ha'r; he holler to her to set de pot er goose-grease in de sun so hit can soften up. He say he done larnt a trick from Brer Rabbit.

His ole 'oman tell him dat she distrust'us 'bout Brer Rabbit's tricks, but Brer Possum don't listen at her. He git de ax, set hit up edge-ways on de choppin'-block. Befo' de ole 'oman and de chillen knew what he gwine do, he git a runnin' start and fling hisse'f, neck or naught, right 'crost dat ax-blade.

Dar!

'Twan't nothin' to do den but roast dat possum. Ole Aunt Critty she roast him. He done hisse'f larnt folks how and dat wid his own foolishness.

Chillen, 'tain't good fer folks to b'lieve all dey

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

hears, let 'lone what dey sees. I knowed er
mighty smart man onct what say he don't b'lieve
nothin' he sees but sunshine, and he don't b'lieve
nothin' he hears but thunder.

XLVI

MISS POLLY PARROT MOVES FROM THE KITCHEN TO THE PARLOR

LONG time ago Miss Polly Parrot useter stay all de time in de kitchen wid Aunt Critty.

Who was Aunt Critty?

She was Johnny Mingo's ol' 'oman. She useter be de cook-'oman fer Miss Susan and de white folks.

Miss Polly Parrot she did love to stay in de kitchen, but she talk too much and tell too much to suit de kitchen. Dat talkin' tongue of her'n was what sont her off at las' from tastin' de top er de rich pot to des nibblin' dry crackers in de parlor.

In de fust time Miss Polly and Aunt Critty useter be de best er friends. Aunt Critty useter tell Miss Polly all her sec'ets. Dunno ef she ever do git fergiveness fer all she tole Miss Polly Parrot.

She tole Miss Polly how she was edgin' off er li'l' bit of all Miss Susan's cake medjures so

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

as she could git herse'f a full pan of de best cake fer de cake-walk gwine be down on de lower plantation. She had no better sense dan to tell Miss Polly how her 'n' her chillen been slyly catchin' 'lasses out de bung hole er de hogshead 'ginst a candy-pullin' what gwine be down on de new ground place. You b'lieve, too, she went on and tole Miss Polly 'bout Johnny Mingo—he belonged to ole Massa, too—done kilt one er Massa's pigs fer de barbecue. De pig and de man bof belonged to one man anyhow.

No sooner Aunt Critty done tole all she know dan Polly turn in to tell all *she* know. Dar! Ef dat tellin' didn't 'larm all de plantation. Miss Polly, she hop up in de kitchen winder, and she call and she bawl twel de white folks hear her:

“Law—sake! Law—sake!
Cuffey got a cake!
Cuffey got a cake!”

Miss Susan she look out de parlor winder. Sho 'nough Cuffey, dat's Aunt Critty's ol'es' boy, got a cake, and de white folks ain't yit eat nothin' off dat bakin'. 'Cos' Aunt Critty 'bleeged to beat dat boy?

Didn't she know Cuffey had dat cake?

MISS POLLY PARROT

Nummine, chillen, 'tain't no business to you nor me *what* Aunt Critty know.

She 'bleeged anyway to beat dat boy, and ev'y lick she hit him, she say:

“You let de white folks ketch you stealin' ag'in,
I'll kill you!
You let de white folks ketch you stealin' ag'in,
I'll kill you!”

All dat fuss tickle Miss Polly and she des set in dat winder and 'nigh 'bout crack her sides laughin'.

Next day she gwine tell some mo' tales on Aunt Critty, and do some mo' laughin'. Miss Susan she come in de kitchen, des like ladies do sometimes. She look dis way, dat way, thoo her specks, seein' no mo'n she should, when heah start up Miss Polly Parrot ag'in callin' and bawlin':

“'Lasses in dat kershaw neck,
'Lasses in de bowl!
Savin' 'lasses for a stew—
Kershaw full—who stole?”

Miss Susan peerin' thoo her glasses say:

“Critty, what my Polly say?
I can't un'stan' her talk to-day.”

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

Critty say: "Law know, Missus, I dunno."

Miss Susan des by accident upsot dat kershaw.
Dar! Dat 'lasses roll over de floor.

Aunt Critty she drap down on de floor go to
moppin' up de 'lasses wid de dish rag, she low':

"Bless my life, I never know
A kershaw be dis ripe befo'!
So ripe de sweetness runnin' out,
Runnin' all around about!"

But Miss Polly ain't done tellin' all she know
yit. A—dar she sets perched in de kitchen win-
der and she call and she bawl:

"I know flour in de punkin shell,
Oh, la, honey, I 'bleeged to tell!
Nice white flour in de punkin shell,
Oh, la, honey, I 'bleeged to tell!"

Miss Susan, she 'low:

"Critty, what my Polly say?
I can't un'stan' her talk to-day."

Aunt Critty say: "Law know, Missus, I
dunno."

Miss Susan she plunk de punkin shell wid her
middle finger—des so. Hit don't go—plink—

MISS POLLY PARROT

plink—like a ripe punkin do go. Hit go—plunk
—plunk! Miss Susan des accident up-sot dat
punkin shell. Out fly de flour!

Aunt Critty she go to stoopin' down breshin'
up de flour, she 'low:

“Bless my life, I never know
Punkins be dis ripe befo’!
All de 'ceptions flyin' out,
Flyin' all around about!”

Ever Aunt Critty do git fergiveness fer all de
sec'ets she done tole Miss Polly!

Miss Polly she ain't done tole all she know yit.
She hook down her bill and chuckle. Den she
call and she bawl:

“Sugar in de gourd
An' you can't git it out!
Hey, cook-'oman,
What you 'bout?
Sugar in de gourd,
You got it in,
Now you git it out ag'in!”

Chillen, dat was too much fer Aunt Critty.
She got de churn dasher to Miss Polly Parrot,
she did.

Miss Polly Parrot she was glad to flew out de

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

winder, she was. She flew clean out de kitchen winder into de parlor winder. Dat was her last long flight. She been in de parlor ever sence. She feared to go back to de kitchen. She say de kitchen too warm er place fer her and de ladies. But don't you b'lieve dat she don't miss dat tastin' of de rich top of de pot a many a time whilst she peekin' dry crackers.

Chillen, de ole rule was er good one: "Whatever you do, don't be cotch doin' it."

XLVII

HOW BRER DEER WAS PUNISHED FOR STEALING GOOBERS

AFTER Brer B'ar give Brer Fox de swole head he got de rest er his goobers hauled up all right.

He piled 'em up in de cornder of de smoke-house. Dar he laid 'em to parch and eat on when winter evenin's he don't feel like stirring round much.

Brer Rabbit done soon eat to de bottom er dat long bag and he wants some mo' goobers. He run up on Brer Fox one day, he say:

“Brer Fox, le's you'n' I
Go and try
To go see Brer B'ar
And steal de goobers dar.”

Brer Fox he shake his head, he do, he say:

“Naw, naw, follerin' you
Done git me nigh kilt, fer true.
I'll no grabble goobers wid you.”

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

D'rectly Brer Deer come 'long. His face was white den, but his tail was long and wavin'.

Brer Rabbit he say: "Brer Deer, le's you 'n' me grab goobers from Brer B'ar," sez he. Brer Deer he done fergit de time Brer Rabbit got him dat white face, and he 'member de time Brer Rabbit done sont de hunters de wrong track and so did him a good turn, so he consent to go in pardners wid Brer Rabbit.

Dey two lift de smoke-house do' off de hinges, dey do, and creep into Brer B'ar's smoke-house whar he done heap his goobers in a pile. Dey brung dey long bags. Brer Rabbit he so nimble he git his bag full fust and fling hit out de do'.

While he draggin' hit off he hear Brer B'ar comin'; straight to de smoke-house he comin', growlin', and grumblin'. Brer Rabbit he drap his bag; he run round de smoke-house whar he can peep in and see Brer Deer rattlin' in de pile er goobers, he say:

"Brer Deer, you got no time to run,
Brer B'ar come wid ax and gun."

Brer Deer trimblin' all over. He say: "La, Brer Rabbit, what can I do?"

THE
KNOT-HOLE



“De man who stole
Thoo this knot-hole.”

THE
MUSEUM
OF
THE
CITY OF
BOSTON
DEPARTMENT OF
SCIENCE

HOW BRER DEER WAS PUNISHED

Brer Rabbit, he holler thoo de knot-hole he done found in de wall:

“Brer Deer, slip yo’ tail thoo
Dis heah knot-hole, do;
Den you tell Mister B’ar
Dat you is des got dat far,
And you ain’t got quite thoo,
'Caze yo’ tail’s yit out, fer true;
Tell him outside he can fin’
De man what rob his goober-vine!”

Brer Deer he done des like Brer Rabbit tell him. Den Brer Rabbit he ’low to run off and save hisse’f and dat bag er goobers also ef he can. But des as Brer Rabbit run round de cornder de house, Brer B’ar grab him. Dar!

Brer Rabbit he ’bleeged to git ’way from B’ar ’caze hit his las’ day ef he don’t. He gwine cl’ar hisse’f ef he do pound up Brer Deer. He say:

“Oh, Brer B’ar,
Him in dar;
Ef you don’t believe me,
Come along and see
De man who stole
Thoo this knot-hole.”

Wid dat Brer Rabbit run to de knot-hole and pull on Brer Deer’s tail, he holler:

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

“Oh, Brer B’ar,
He in dar;
Come, I say,
He pullin’ ’way.”

Brer B’ar come runnin’ an’ hollerin’, “I’ll git him! I’ll git him! I’ll git him!”

He lam loose wid his ax at Brer Deer’s tail, cut it short off.

Brer Rabbit say: “I’ll run round de y’o’her side ’n’ git de res’ of him fer you.”

Brer Rabbit he got his bag er goobers and gone on.

When Brer B’ar open de smoke-house do’, Brer Deer out leap him and gone on also. Brer Deer short-tail ever sence, short tail as Brer Rabbit.

Chillen, speculatin’ ain’t safe an’ sure fer ev’y-body. And ’tain’t never good to ’sociate wid de sinner, ’caze whilst you aid him you mo’n apt ter git de licks what’s aimed at him.

XLVIII

BRER DEER'S REVENGE ON MISTER TERRAPIN

BRER DEER 'low he sho done live by de hardes' in his pas' days, and now Brer Tarrapin done say he can beat Brer Deer in a race, and dat was de hardes' lick yit—ef it be true. So Brer Deer, he say:

“Brer Tarrapin, I bedoubt you.
It 'mains fer you to prove hit true.”

Brer Deer 'low Brer Rabbit done cause him to git a white face. Brer Rabbit done hol' his tail whilst Brer B'ar cut it off. He say hit hard times wid him, but he say fleetness yit lef' wid him. He say he know he can beat anything in de woods when it comes to runnin'.

Brer Tarrapin, he up and 'low he didn't know so good 'bout dat; he 'low: “Brer Deer, 'twixt me and you hit'd be 'bout tit fer tat.” Now of all! Brer Tarrapin, he ought to be de las' man to 'spute fleetness wid Brer Deer 'caze he sho is de slowes' man in de woods.

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

Brer Deer he cl'ar 'stonish most outen his speech; he des stan' and look down on Brer Tarrapin.

Brer Tarrapin wan't dem days no sech crackle-back, roughened feller as he is now. Dem days de roof er dat house what he totes round wid him was des as smooth and shiney as a tortoi'-shell cat's back.

Brer Deer might be 'bout struck speechless, but he can't let no dare like dat pass, so d'rectly he pick up de voice ter say:

"It 'mains fer you to prove it true.
Brer Tarrapin, I redoubt you."

Dat don't put no change on Brer Tarrapin. He 'low he done pass de word and now he do stan' ready to prove it.

So de critters dey sot a day fer de race. Right 'long in Deer's own run de critters chose de three mile postes. No sooner dey done sot de postes dan Brer Tarrapin at his ole time cunnin' ways set three of his bro'bers on de course, one at de start, one at de nex' pos' and one at de nex' pos'. He hisse'f take de las' pos'.

Time to start Brer Deer and Brer Tarrapin at de start er de course.

BRER DEER'S REVENGE

Brer Deer he run to de fus pos', he holler, "Whar you, Tarrapin?"

Brer Tarrapin's bro'her make ansah right foot de pos': "Heah me, Brer Deer."

Co'se Brer Deer was 'stonished. But he run de faster, time he git to de nex' pos' dar sat Tarrapin. Brer Deer nigh 'bout kill hisse'f runnin' de las' time, and when he reached de las' pos' dar sot Tarrapin.

Dat last one was Brer Tarrapin hisse'f sho 'nough.

Brer Deer plum 'maze in his min'. He know he can run, and he know Brer Tarrapin do be de slowes' man in de woods. But now Brer Deer, he don't know what he do know. Brer Rabbit, he set side de run, he look like he ain't see nothin', look like he ain't hear nothin', he set 'crost-legged like a banjo picker; he sing:

"Ole trick, new trick,
Or no trick at all!
Count up de Tarrapins,
Dar fo' in all!"

Brer Deer he pantin' and he listenin'. Brer Rabbit he jest pat his foot and sing:

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

“One lick, two lick,
Three lick or fo’!
Tarrapin fambly
Trick me befo’!”

Dar! Brer Deer, he done got de 'ceptions outer dat song. He straighten up he did. He's mad 'caze he been fooled s' slick wid dat trick and he come—blam! wid all his fo' foots on Brer Tarrapin's back. He crack up Brer Tarrapin's back so bad dat hit crackle up twel yit. Off Brer Deer run to de nex' pos' back'ards, and—blim! Down wid all fo' foots he come on de nex' Tarrapin's back.

Brer Deer he tromple on de back of ev'y Tarrapin on dat course. Mo'n dat he tromple right now on de back of ev'y Tarrapin what he come 'crosst in de woods. You can't find nairy Tarrapin in de woods what Brer Deer ain't done crackle up his back fer him.

Chillen, sense is sometimes safer dan swift-ness.

XLIX

HOW MISTER RABBIT GOT A GOOD DINNER

DAT was de worst piece of devilment Brer Rabbit ever is done.

Brer Rabbit he was settin' in his do' wid his chin in his hands, he was. His eyes shet tight, he swingin' hisse'f in de do'-way singin': "All de time scratchin' and a pickin'! And I can't s' much 's git piece er fried chicken." He keep up a-sighin'; he keep up a-cryin'. He sing:

"Plenty er 'bacca, plenty er greens,
Plenty er pickin' of new snap beans!
But all time stealin', all time pickin',
Nairy a wing-bit er fried chicken!"

Des den Brer Rabbit he hear down de road: 'Trot! Trot! Trot! 'Twas de Preacher-Man. Oh, yes, ev'y sorter somebody got to have dey preacher. Crow, he preaches for de birds. Dat what de ole folks useter tell me.

Preacher-Man he have on a high hat, so high! He have on a long coat, so long! He ride on a po' horse, so po'!

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

"Mornin', Brer Rabbit," says he.

"Mornin', mornin'," says Brer Rabbit, says he.
"Whar be ye gwine to-day?"

"I was des gwine down to Sis Susan's house," says de Preacher-Man, "being of a sort of a Fort' Sunday, she'll be lookin' for me, and mo'n dat she do get up de bes' fried chicken dinner as ever was."

Dat des do make Brer Rabbit's mouf water, look mos' like Mister Preacher-Man mought a-knowed what he was studyin' 'bout. He say to hisse'f:

"Dat's de way de world go 'round,
Dat's de way things do be found.
All fer dat preacher!
None fer dis creature!"

Den he say sorter solemn:

"Is you heard, is you got de word
From dar since you las' heard?"

"Not since las' Fort'," says de Preacher-Man, lookin' sorter skeered like.

"Is you heard from de chillen?"

"Not edzactly, no-no-o-o-o," says de Preacher-Man.

HOW RABBIT GOT A GOOD DINNER

“Den you ain’t heard, is you, dat her chillen is tuck wid hilarious chills, and she down wid a terrifus fever, and de servants tuck wid de mumps, and——”

Preacher-Man he ’gun to look mighty solemn.

“Oho!” says Brer Rabbit. “Dar’s lots er news in dis neighborhood. I is hearn dat Miss Susan is done sont her las’ chicken er de fryin’ size up to Mister Snake’s funeral, des ten miles up de road. I hear dey gwine ter give him a great funeral, long as dey was so shy er him, when he was livin’. Dey gwine to have big doin’s up dar. I wisht ter gracious I could be dar, but dey all keep de ’membrance dat me ’n’ him wan’t speakin’ when he was tuck off so sudden—no mo’ was dey—and dey won’t give me no invite; but I heard ’em say dat dey do wisht dat de Preacher-Man could be dar.”

All dat time Brer Rabbit talkin’, de Preacher he studyin’. D’rectly he say: “A man ’bleeged to go whar he needed mos’.”

Brer Rabbit, he laugh behime his hand and say easy:

“Whar de bes’ eatin’ is,
Dar de bes’ needin’ is.”

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

Preacher-Man he set his po' horse in de road ag'in and start fer whar Brer Rabbit says Mister Snake's funeral is gwine be.

Den Brer Rabbit he jumped out de do', he do; he clap his heels toge'her, and he lit out fer de spring-branch. When he git dar, he 'gin to dabble in de wet clay. He pat and he work wid hit and d'rectly he make hisse'f a tall hat outer dat clay, same like de Preacher-Man's hat. Den he put hit on his head, way down over his years!

Brer Rabbit he do laugh.

He laugh and he work, and he work and he laugh, and he make out er some clay a long coat, same like what de Preacher-Man wo'.

Brer Rabbit he laugh.

Den Brer Rabbit he make hisse'f a pair er saddle-bags outer dat clay.

Den Brer Rabbit he do laugh.

Den he stop laughin', he do, he say:

“Whoever seed a preacher walkin' down de road?
A hoss he gotter have, ef hit's thin as a boa'd!”

So Brer Rabbit he take up a stick, he do, and he kivver hit wid dat wet clay, twel hit look like a rale sho 'nough po' hoss.

Brer Rabbit he do laugh den.



“Jumpin’ high—clippity, down de road to Miss Susan’s.”

HOW RABBIT GOT A GOOD DINNER

Brer Rabbit he git on de hoss, fling on de saddle-bags. Dot hoss won't go. He whip dat hoss. Hoss won't go. Brer Rabbit he won't be outdone; he set his foots on de groun' and off he go holdin' to be bridle rein and jumpin' high—clippity, down de road to Miss Susan's he go. When he git nigh Miss Susan's, all de chillen run tell dey Ma: "Mister Preacher-Man comin' and comin' mo' swif' dan he ever come befo'."

Brer Rabbit he make like he tie his hoss 'ginst de hitchin' rack, and he do bol'ly walk in.

Miss Susan, she say: "Mornin', mornin'! Walk right in."

Dat what Brer Rabbit do.

Miss Susan, she say: "Take off yer hat, Brer Preacher-Man."

But dat Brer Rabbit don't 'low to do.

"Hem! Hem! Sister," says he, "'scuse me, but er misery in de jaw won't lemme take off dis hat."

"'Course, 'course," says Miss Susan. Den she say: "Brer Preacher-Man, lemme take off dis heavy coat?"

Dat skeer Brer Rabbit ag'in, but he say: "Hem! Hem! Sister, a misery in de shoulder blade make me keep on dis coat."

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

Miss Susan, she say: "'Course, 'course."

Brer Rabbit he hear chickens squallin' in de back-yard and hot lard spittin' on de kitchen fire, so he draw his hat far'r over his years and say, "Hem! Hem!"

De chillen dey gigglin' and pullin' on dey Ma's dress. Dey done on close range spy out who Brer Rabbit is. Dey say: "Ma! Ma! Dat ain't no Preacher-Man! Dat des old Brer Rabbit!"

Brer Rabbit, he say: "What dem good li'l chillens say?"

Miss Susan, she say: "Dey des talkin' foolishness like chillen does do. Dey say you ain't no Preacher-Man, des Brer Rabbit, de which ev'y-body, nigh or furder, know dat Brer Rabbit is de very worst man in all dis country round."

"Hem! Hem!" says he. "I des now pass Brer Rabbit settin' in his do' lookin' mighty good and gloomiful."

"Time he lookin' gloomiful, ef he ain't good," says Miss Susan, "'caze he been ca'yin' on scandalous." Den she let in to 'buse Brer Rabbit; she 'fuse to say a good word fer him.

Brer Rabbit he egg her on to say much and mo'. He heah dat day all de devilment he ever done in dat settlement and mo', too.

HOW RABBIT GOT A GOOD DINNER

Miss Susan she done set one 'oman ter wring chickens' necks, 'nother ter pick 'em, 'nother cook 'oman ter fry 'em. De dishes began ter come in hot and fast. Ole Brer Rabbit he eat much an' mo' dan even ten preacher-men can eat.

Whilst he eatin' Miss Susan she keep a-talkin' 'bout Brer Rabbit's meanness, she do.

Brer Rabbit he say solemn like: "I gwine keep memembrance of all dis you tell me 'bout Brer Rabbit! I ain't gwine fergit one word all dis you tellin' me." Brer Rabbit done sop ev'y dish dry, and yit he might er even den got off unbeknownst to Miss Susan, but she done sont de chillen out to water de Preacher-Man's hoss. Chillen hol' de water to dat po' hoss' nose. Nose melt off. Dey set up a gigglement, and keep on waterin' dat hoss twel he do all melt—'cept de stick de clay be daubed on. Den dey run inter de table des gigglin' and hollin': "Yo' hoss done melt to mud! Yo' hoss done melt to mud!"

Brer Rabbit he don't know what to do; he des keel over like he done faint off.

Den dem chillen dey holler: "He done fall a-faintin'. Po' water on him!" And den dey fetch water faster dan dey ever done befo'. Dey des bodaciously drench Brer Rabbit.

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

- Dar! His tall hat fell off.
- Yas! His long coat melt off.
- So! His big boots go.
- Ho! His great gloves slip off.
- Sho! Nobody 'tall but old Brer Rabbit!
- Miss Susan she so 'stonish she des hang her mouf open; can't speak a mumblin' word.
- Brer Rabbit he lit out, he did. He holler back as he go: "I gwine keep de 'membrance of all dat you tole me 'bout Brer Rabbit. I sho is!"

Chillen, don't fix up to look like dem what's better'n you, 'caze when de dye wash off you may look wo's'n you is.

L

HOW PEOPLE LEARNED THE TASTE OF POSSUM AND POTATOES

DES befo' Brer Possum been so bad fool plantin' pardners wid Brer Pig Brer Rabbit had done come 'long ax Brer Possum will he pitch de crap and plant pardners wid him. Brer Possum, like de po' man, he do be, is s' glad to git anybody's help dat he say don't keer ef he do and so said, so done.

Brer Rabbit make like he gwine do de faires' and he gin Brer Possum de fust choice, top crap er bottom crap. Brer Possum, feelin' chilly wid de early spring, say he'll take de crap de sun shine on—he'll take top crap. Brer Rabbit he take den and plant de field in turnips. Brer Possum and his crowd nibble greens some, but by winter dey ribs rattle in dey skin.

Next year, hope high in de heart, Brer Possum consent to plant in and thoo wid Brer Rabbit ag'in. Dis time he trust to hopin' and not seein' and he choose de crap dat dirt kiver. Dat year Brer Rabbit sow de field in black-eyed lady peas.

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

Old Pete (starvation) looked Brer Possum in de face dat year. Yit Brer Rabbit he talk so gentlemanlyfied and so sympathize wid Brer Possum dat he consent to go half wid Brer Rabbit onct mo' and he hold to bottom crap fer his sheer ag'in. Dat season Brer Rabbit see fit to set 'tater slips. Well den.

Ole Pete set night and day sider Brer Possum's hearth dat winter and on one evenin' Brer Possum brusin' round, lookin' fer some sorter vittles to tote home to his folks come upon Brer Rabbit and his crowd all settin' in a ring round a fire roastin' 'taters. De rich smell er dat roastin' hit sho rile Brer Possum. He bound to make a try fer some er dem 'taters. Laggin' man as he is, he give one leap midst er dat ring; he scatter dem li'l' rabbits dis way and dat way, make dey eyes pop out dey heads mo'n dey is popped. Into dat bed er ashes he leap bound to scratch fer dem 'taters. But—den—dat bed er coals hot, too hot; dem 'taters hot and crispin; crackin', lettin' sugar out.

Well—'twas a greasy roastin' dat Brer Rabbit raked out dat night. Folks is knowed ever sence den how good possum go wid 'taters roast in coals and ashes. Possum don't hant 'tater bed

POSSUM AND POTATOES

nor bank no mo'. Mo'n dat he don't plant partners no mo'.

Chillen, you maybe risk much gwine de lone hand, but you apt to reap mo'.

"PREACHIN' AIN'T PRACTICIN'"

RABBITS has dey regular times to meet up and cuss and discuss, samelike free niggers. Dem rabbits dey goes down to a sand bar in de creek, and dey has dey meetin's dar, dey ring up de ring on dat sand bar.

One time dey had a big convention dar. Dey vote and vote, dey make a motion and take a notion, conglomerate and nominate. Dey pass laws, and by-laws, and try laws. Den when de convention done pass sech good laws dat dey feel jobly 'bout it dey 'cide to have a big dance.

Down on de sand-bar dey dance. Dey cross dey feet, dey shuffle and back-step, some pat and de y'o'hers skip, whirl and twirl.

D'rectly de ol'es' rabbit in de bunch, he say: "Stop! Stop! Y'all stop dancin'. I hear a dog barkin'."

De rest er de rabbits say: "Don't listen to dat ole slavery-time critter. Go on wid yo' dancin'. Convention done des pass a law dat no mo' dogs gwine run no mo' rabbits. Dance on."



"He lit out, he did."

"PREACHIN' AIN'T PRACTICIN' "

On dey dance. Skip, rip, tip! Dance and prance. Heah dey go shuffle and slide—swing and cut dat pigeon-wing!

Ol'es' rabbit say ag'in: "Stop! stop! stop dancin'! Git ter runnin'! I heah dat dog barkin' nigher."

De rest er de rabbits say: "O, go on, don't listen ter dat ole critter. Don't you know convention des done pass de law dat dogs ain't gwine no mo' run rabbits."

Heah dey go shuffle and twirl, whirl and hit a back step.

Ole rabbit say: "Stop! Stop! Quit dancin'! Dat dog mos' heah!"

Rabbits say: "Dance on! Dance on! Convention des pass de law no dogs don't run no mo' rabbits."

"Yas," dat old rabbit say, "but den dat dog wan't at dat convention—and—I doubt if a dog's jaw gwine obey a rabbit's law." He lit out, he did. He wan't too soon neither, fer heah come de dogs—and de way dem rabbits scattered out!

Chillen, hit mighty easy fer folks to make good laws, but de trouble is fer to git folks to take 'em and keep 'em.

LII

WHY MISTER MOCKING BIRD STAYS AT HOME

O LE days all de birds was 'bleeged to stay
in dese woods all de year round.

Dar war'n't no flounce 'crost de sea
fer dis one and flounce to be mountain fer dat
one. Dey all hatter stay right heah on dis plan-
tation and sing dey bes' songs all de year round.

All 'cept de Mockin' Bird. He Mister Man's
pet. He free to go and come des as he please.
But he git pettish like a well fed nigger and he
pretty soon get to be too frolicsome and too free
spoken.

He swingin' on de top limb of de live oak-
tree singin' 'bout how de sea sound when Miss
Swaller start up:

“R—R—Route—
I wish my time was out!
I'd go to see
Dat dar sea
Ef it cos' me
Half-a-dollar!
Half-a-dollar!
R—R—Route—
I wish my time was out!”



“‘I’ll sing yo’ song—des so!”

MISTER MOCKING BIRD

Mister Mockin' Bird he take up de word from
Miss Swaller:

“Go de route—
R—R—Route—
I'll sing while you're out
I'll charge you
Less to sing it, too.
Dan—half-a-dollar!
Half-a-dollar!”

Co'se Miss Swaller jump at de offer and off
she go. She stay long as she please, come back
to suit herself, leave Mister Mockin' Bird at
home singin' her song for her.

Den Mister Mockin' Bird he sing 'bout a
mighty warm holler he know a mighty fur away.
De li'l bit Wren say:

“Oh, me!
I like ter see
Ef it suit me!
Twitter-ree!!!”

Mockin' Bird say desso: “Why'n you go?”
Wren sing:

“Oh, me!
Can't you see?
Folks'd miss me,
Oh, me!”

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

Mockin' Bird say desso, "You go. I'll sing yo' song—des so!"

Sho 'nough he set dar and he twitter des same as de Wren:

“Oh, me!
Can't see me
In dis tree.
Oh, me!
Twitter-ree——”

Mister Man don't get chance to miss Miss Wren's singing. Mister Mockin' Bird mock her song so proper.

Same way it was wid all de birds, de Robin, de Whip-po'-will, de Scratchin'-Billy, de Red Crown Warbler, and a many a mo'.

Mister Mockin' Bird he such a 'bligin' feller as can't say "no" to none at all. He offer to sing fer one and all. He doing dat same thing twel yet. He useter be de free's' bird of all. Now he ain't free at all, and he done bind hisse'f and wind hisse'f right heah wid takin' all dem song-chunes on hisse'f. Hot or cole, dark or fair, he right out dar. He keepin' up de songs of all de birds so good, us and de woods don't hardly miss 'em whilst dey off on a frolic.

MISTER MOCKING BIRD

Chillen, hit mighty bad to take too much on yo'se'f 'caze when you take it on, nobody gwine to take it off.

LIII

HOW JOHNNY MINGO GOT FREE AT LAST

JOHNNY MINGO got free at last. How?
Let Mammy tell it.

In de fust times like I done tole you, Johnny Mingo was de onlies' ole rale, right-black man in dis country. De white folks done fool him to de ship by wavin' a red handkercher befo' him. When he on dat ship dey tie dat' red handkercher on his head—den dey got him. Long as he wear dat red handkercher he's a white man's nigger.

Later when black folks 'gun to thicken up in dis country, dey talks much sec'et 'bout how dey wants to git free. Johnny Mingo also talk to hisse'f, 'bout he wisht he was free. He done stole gole to make hisse'f free, but time he roll dat gole outen his handkercher into dat pot, and tie dat handkercher on his head ag'in—den he des as far fum bein' free as ever. Also he mos' skeered to hang round de swamp, feared folks

HOW JOHNNY MINGO GOT FREE

gwine know well as he what dem frogs tellin' 'bout:

“You stole!
You stole!
Pot-er-gole!”

Also, he mo' skeerder 'bout folks findin' out what Chuck-will's-widder sayin' 'bout:

“'Twixt de elm and de white oak.”

He feared some folks mought find out what he can't find out; 'twixt which elm tree and which white oak. All dat pester Johnny Mingo's mind so much dat he done mos' gin out de idee of ever bein' free, when one night he went to sleep Massa's nigger Mingo, and woke up nex' day his own man. Jingo! De ballet er dat tale hit run sorter so:

“Rogue come
To rogue's home,
Steal rogue fum
'Mong rogue's home,
Make rogue roam
From rogue's home
To cross ag'in sea-foam.”

What's de 'ception er dat song? Well, um—hum. Chillen, you hatter study dat out fer yo'se'f, 'caze dat's one riddle rhyme yo' black

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

Mammy ain't gwine tell to no white folks. But dat red handkercher hit was de 'casion of Johnny Mingo b'longin' to Mister Man, and dat red handkercher was de 'casion of Johnny Mingo gittin' free.

Mister Lizard he been al'a's a sleek man and a smart man. Some folks s'pose he's a 'ceivin' man. I don't know so good 'bout dat. But anyhow he done made his livin' by stealin' Mister Snake's hoe-cake. So now Mister Lizard done got his vittles, den he study 'bout whar he gwine to git his cloze. Hit been in de past times wid him like de ballet de folks sings over de river when times is hard:

“Wait, head! Wait, feet!
But de stomach, hit say, eat!”

But now he done got his fill of somethin' to eat, and he 'gin to study 'bout he gotter git somethin' to wear. So projec'in' on dat ques'in' Mister Lizard hid hisse'f in de shucks of Johnny Mingo's pallet bed, he did. Den 'twixt daylight and dark he slip to Johnny Mingo's headin', he do, and den—easy—he slip hisse'f under Johnny Mingo's head handkercher. Mister Lizard he slips and slide round and round under dat head

HOW JOHNNY MINGO GOT FREE

handkercher twel d'rectly he git dat head handkercher loose. Den, off he slip, draggin' dat head handkercher wid him.

Come daylight Johnny Mingo he git up and he look high and he look low for dat head handkercher, but he don't find hit. Dar. Now he's a free man. Free to work, ef he wish, and shirk when he can.

Johnny Mingo los' his handkercher. Johnny Mingo's ole 'oman didn't lose hern. Did she git free? Don't you see?

De one dat work free don't easy git free. Johnny Mingo don't know whar his red handkercher go, twel one day, long time, he run up on Mister Lizard dress' in blue, wid a red handkercher tied round his neck. Right den Mister Lizard git his name folks call him by: Blue Boy wid a red handkercher round his neck.

Was dat 'fo' de war? 'Co'se 'twas 'fo' de war. Does you see critters now 'zemblin' folks dat way sence de war? Yas. Dar was some few free niggers 'fo' de war.

Right den Mister Lizard made 'nother step to gittin' rich. Des you git yo' vittles and cloze insu'd you, and hit ain't hard fer to fill de money-puss, den.

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

Tell you dat riddle rhyme, and sense you de 'ceptions of hit? Naw! Naw! Some things niggers know white folks ain't got no business ever knowin'.

Chillen, whe'r it be best to be free or not who know? De apple tree outside de fence has a many a hand to shake it rough.

LIV

THE OLD FOLKS OF THE WOODS

DE owls are thickenin' up in de woods mightily. Nights when I leaves y'll sleep in yo' beds I hear dem owls des talkin' back and fort' to each y'o'her in dem dark pines.

In de ole days dey was two ole owls, and dey was ole, ole owls, and dey was lookin' fer comp'ny. Dey bresh and fix up dey nest in de holler tree and den waited fer comp'ny.

Who was dey comp'ny? De ole, ole folks was gwine to be dey comp'ny. De ole owls is ole folks and de ole folks is ole owls, ef dey lives to be ole 'nough. When ole folks gits too ole to die, den dey bes owls.

Is any folks on dis plantation turned to be owls?

No, chillen, 'caze dar ain't any of 'em ole 'nough. But—on de next plantation—and de next—maybe.

In de fust times one night des at de break of

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

de day like I was tellin' you dem two ole owls
was settin' on two hills fur apart, 'way behime
dem dark pines. Dey was lookin' fer comp'ny
den. De fust one holler to de y'o'her:

“You—you—you
Didn't stay home
Las' night——”

De nex' one holler back:

“Naw, nor you—you—
You nuther!
Who—who—who—was dar?”

De fust one holler back:

“John Patton and his wife
Ned Tatton and his wife
And some one or two
Mo'—mo'—mo!”

De nex' one ax:

“Will dey stay
Home? Home? Home?”

De fust one 'low:

“Yas, and who—who—
Who'd you bring home?”



"Dey bresh and fix up dey nest."

THE OLD FOLKS OF THE WOODS

De nex' one give de ansah :

“Joe Bratton and his wife,
Tobe Slatton and his wife,
And, La' knows,
Who—all!”

De fust one ax :

“Will dey stay home
Wid we—all?”

De nex' one say :

“Yas, dey same as we—all,
And we is de same as dey—all.”

Den John Patton and his wife and Ned Tatton and his wife and Joe Bratton and his wife and Tobe Slatton and his wife and all de rest of 'em start in ansahin' back and fort', too:

“Who you all?
Yas, we all
Same's you all!”

Dar's 'nough comp'ny now in de woods fer de owls. All dem'ole folks what dey talks 'bout and ansah back and fort' wid, dey is owls—dey was too ole to die, and dey stay now all time wid de owls.

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

De owls is mighty wise critters, 'twon't do fer de sense and 'sperience of de ole folks to die out de world, some er dat sense got to live in holler trees, er big books, er some whar 'no'her.

Chillen, take keer who you 'vite to yer house fer you don't know how long dey'll stay wid you.

THE DYEING EXPERIENCE OF MISTER RABBIT

OLE Miss Rabbit she a kinder anxious somebody. She done seen so much trouble. Her eyes done got nigh 'bout pop outer her head watchin' fer to see whicher way and how Mister Rabbit is comin' home.

His eyes nigh 'bout popped outer his head peepin' out fer to see whicher way and how is de safe way fer him to get home. Yit Mister Rabbit he do keep steady at his devilment and tricks.

One day Miss Rabbit, she at de bored well doin' de week's washin', de chillen all off huntin' pa'tidge eggs, Mister Rabbit he come home. 'Twa'n't nobody in de house. He take up de drinkin' gourd. Miss Rabbit she des done burnt out de mouf hole in de handle of a new green gourd and done scrape and holler and scrape hit out to make a new drinkin' gourd fer de fambly fer de nex' year.

Mister Rabbit he take dat gourd in de shed room, and he shet to de do', he do. He pull up de chist 'ginst de do' and fasten it close. Den

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

he tuck out his pocket knife and set to cuttin' up dat new gourd. He 'low to cut and carve a new set er teef, 'caze he been missin' teef ever sence he knocked out mos' de teefes dat he had in his head at Miss Susan's cake walk.

'Bout time he git thoo makin' dem teefes and settin' em in his mouf, Miss Rabbit she come in de front room do'. She stir up de coals and de chunks in de fire place, she put on a new back log, she put a bit on de meat hook over de fire, and she set de skillet on de coals to git het up. She po' de clabber out de jar in de churn, and she turn 'round and 'round to look fer de gourd fer ter dip water fer to rinse off de churn dasher.

Mister Rabbit he no sooner got dem gourd teef set in his mouf dan he spy Miss Rabbit's dye-pot whar she dips de hanks er yarn in. De dye-pot settin' out on de shed room winder shelf. Dat make him take a notion, what make him laugh. Lawsy-massy-me! His mouf is so full now er teefes dat when he laugh he sound like somebody chatterin' and chokin'.

Miss Rabbit she stop looking fer de gourd fer to rinse her churn dasher. She stop and listen.

Mister Rabbit he dip de rag mop in de dye-pot and he laugh agin.



“‘Go way fum dat do.’”

THE DYEING OF MISTER RABBIT

Miss Rabbit she sho some er de chillen in de shed-room done drown in de wash-tub, or done cotch a fire and clean burnt up. She drap de dasher and run to de shed-room do'.

De do' won't open.

Ole Mister Rabbit he rubbin' de mop on his whiskers, yit laughin' to study 'bout how he gwine fool de folks at de next settlement. "He—he! He—he!!" His whiskers ain't grey now; he move de dye-mop dis way and dat.

Miss Rabbit she shake and she shake, she beat and she beat at dat do'.

Mister Rabbit he des now hear her at dat do'. He say way down deep in his th'roat, bes' he can talk wid his mouf so full er teef, "Go way fum dat do'."

Miss Rabbit, she 'low: "You dar, ole man? Gracious me, ole man, what you doin' in dar?"

Mister Rabbit, he 'low: "Go way fum dat do'. I'm dyein!"

Miss Rabbit she shove and she push worser, yit she can't budge dat do'. Den she run hollerin' out de house to git up de chillen and 'larm de plantation. She holler up de ol'es' boy and

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

sont him atter de Snake-Doctor. She call up de nex' ol'es' boy and sont him atter de Preacher Crow. She sont de nex', and de nex', and de nex', fer ter give de ansah to de feller servants and to 'larm all de plantation 'round. She tell 'em don't spare dey breaf and dey wind 'caze dey daddy say he dyin'.

No sooner dan Miss Rabbit gone ter git up de chillen, dan Mister Rabbit done got fixed to suit hisse'f. Den out de shed-room winder he lipt and he lopt down de cross-cut path to de next settlement.

'Time de chillen, de neighbors, de preacher, de whole plantation git ter de house Miss Rabbit she set up sech an 'larm as never was, 'bout her ole man say he was dyin'.

Woodpecker, he out de side er de house:

“Tap! Tap!
Rap! Rap!”

He rivin' coffin boards.

In dash de Snake-Doctor.

Miss Rabbit twix hollerin' and cryin' tell him Mister Rabbit he done tole her thoo de do' he dyin'. She spec' now he gwine say he dead.

THE DYEING OF MISTER RABBIT

She say when he tell her he dyin' his teefes deys chatterin' in his head den.

Snake-Doctor say dat a mighty bad sign 'caze when is any body heard Mister Rabbit's teefes chatterin' befo'? Den he say: "Whar he?"

Miss Rabbit she p'int to de shed-room do', she 'low: "Dar he."

Snake-Doctor, he 'low: "Somebody bust open de do'."

Des as de whole plantation was 'bout to turn loose and bust de shed-room do' down Mister Fox come 'long.

He 'low: "Hi, what y'all want to bust de do' down fer?"

De folks and critters 'low: "'Caze Brer Rabbit in dar. He done say he dyin'. Spec' d'rectly he gwine say he dead."

Mister Fox clap his leg, double up and laugh and laugh, he do. He 'low: "Ef you all honin' atter seein' Brer Rabbit des go 'crosst to de next settlement. Brer Rabbit dar wid his whiskers dyed bodacious red wid poke-berry juice, new gourd teef in his mouf. Him pickin' de banjo and jokin' 'mongst de gals."

Dat sort er broke up de funeral and de bu'yin'. Preacher Crow, he flounce out, he say: "Dis

BEHIND THE DARK PINES

heah de hardest house fer to git up a weddin' in,
or a funeral in ever he did see."

Chillen, de man what fool you all his life
mighty apt to fool you in a job er dyein'!

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