

A Banjo Song

Oh, dere's lots o' keer an' trouble

In dis world to swaller down;

An' ol' Sorrer's purty lively

In her way o' gittin' roun'.

Yet dere 's times when I furgit 'em, —

Aches an' pains an' troubles all, —

An' it's when I tek at ebenin'

My ol' banjo f'om de wall.

'Bout de time dat night is fallin'

An' my daily wu'k is done,

An' above de shady hilltops

I kin see de settin' sun;

When de quiet, restful shadders

Is beginnin' jes' to fall, —

Den I take de little banjo

F'om its place upon de wall.

Den my fam'ly gadders roun' me

In de fadin' o' de light,

Ez I strike de stings to try 'em

Ef dey all is tuned er-right.

An' it seems we're so nigh heaben

We kin hyeah de angels sing

When de music o' dat banjo

Sets my cabin all er-ring.

An' my wife an' all de othahs, —

Male an' female, small an' big, —

Even up to gray-haired granny,

Seem jes' boun' to do a jig;

Twel I change de style o' music,

Change de movement an' de time,

An' de ringin' little banjo

Plays an ol' hea't-feelin' hime.

An' somehow my th'roat gits choky,

An' a lump keeps tryin' to rise

Lak it wan'ed to ketch de water

Dat was flowin' to my eyes;

An' I feel dat I could sorter

Knock de socks clean off o' sin

Ez I hyeah my po' ol' granny

Wif huh tremblin' voice jine in.

Den we all th'ow in our voices

Fu' to he'p de chune out too,\

Lak a big camp-meetin' choiry

Tryin' to sing a mou'nah th'oo.

An' our th'oahts let out de music,

Sweet an' solemn, loud an' free,

Twell de raftahs o' my cabin

Echo wif de melody.

Oh, de music o' de banjo,

Quick an' deb'lish, solemn, slow,
Is de greates' joy an' solace
Dat a weary slave kin know!
So jes' let me hyeah it ringin',
Dough de chune be po' an' rough,
It's a pleasure; an' de pleasures
O' dis life is few enough.

Now, de blessed little angels
Up in heaben, we are told,
Don't do nothin' all dere lifetime
'Ceptin' play on ha'ps o' gold.
Now I think heaben'd be mo' homelike
Ef we'd hyeah some music fall
F'om a real ol'-fashioned banjo,
Like dat one upon de wall.