

APPENDIX.

SOME CREOLE MELODIES.

MORE than a hundred years ago Thibault de Chanvallon expressed his astonishment at the charm and wonderful sense of musical rhythm characterizing the slave-songs and slave-dances of Martinique. The rhythmical sense of the negroes especially impressed him. "I have seen," he writes, "seven or eight hundred negroes accompanying a wedding-party to the sound of song. they would all leap up in the air and come down together;—the movement was so exact and general that the noise of their fall made but a single sound."

An almost similar phenomenon may be witnessed any Carnival season in St. Pierre,—while the Devil makes his nightly round, followed by many hundred boys clapping hands and leaping in chorus. It may also be observed in the popular malicious custom of the *pillard*, or, in creole, *piyé*. Some person whom it is deemed justifiable and safe to annoy, may suddenly find himself followed in the street by a singing chorus of several hundred, all clapping hands and dancing or running in perfect time, so that all the bare feet strike the ground together. Or the *pillard-chorus* may even take up its position before the residence of the party disliked, and then proceed with its performance. An example of such a *pillard* is given further on, in the song entitled *Loéma tombé*. The improvisation by a single voice begins the *pillard*,—which in English might be rendered as follows:—

(Single voice) You little children there!—you who were by the river-side!

Tell me truly this:—Did you see Loéma fall?

Tell me truly this—

(Chorus, opening) Did you see Loéma fall?

(Single voice) Tell me truly this—

(Chorus) Did you see Loéma fall?

(Single voice, more rapidly) Tell me truly this—

(Chorus, more quickly) Loéma fall!

(Single voice) Tell me truly this—

(Chorus) Loéma fall!

(Single voice) Tell me truly this—

(Chorus, always more quickly, and more loudly, all the hands clapping together like a fire of musketry) Loéma fall! etc.

The same rhythmic element characterizes many of the games and round dances of Martinique children;—but, as a rule, I think it is perceptible that the sense of time is less developed in the colored children than in the black.

The other melodies which are given as specimens of Martinique music show less of the African element,—the nearest approach to it being in *Tant sirop*; but all are probably creations of the mixed race. *Marie-Clémence* is a Carnival satire composed not more than four years ago. *To-to-to* is very old—dates back, perhaps, to the time of the *belles-affranchies*. It is seldom sung now except by survivors of the old régime: the sincerity and tenderness of the emotion that inspired it—the old sweetness of heart and simplicity of thought,—are passing forever away.

To my friend, Henry Edward Krehbiel, the musical lecturer and critic,—at once historian and folklorist in the study of race-music,—and to Mr. Frank van der Stucken, the New York musical composer, I owe the preparation of these four melodies for voice and piano-forte. The arrangements of *To-to-to* and *Loéma tombé* are Mr. Van der Stucken's.