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MAMMY'S CHILLUN

A POETIC TRIBUTE TO THE PHILOSOPHY AND
HUMOR OF THE NEGRO RACE

Last week there appeared in our midst a modest volume of verse entitled *Mammy's Chillun and Other Poems*, by U. G. Wilson. This is a pure Harrisonburg product, having been both written and printed here. The author, so long as his health allowed, served his native town well in the capacity of associate principal of the colored school.

But the book wins an interest more than local. It is carefully edited and well printed and—one thing needful, after all—it has the right ring. It is good verse, simple and sincere. It has life. It is often humorous, sometimes tender. One feels that the incidents and pithy sayings are not mere inventions of the writer, but were caught by a quick and sympathetic eye and ear from the real life of men and women about him. In fact, he calls his verses "bits of humor and truth gathered at first-hand from among my people." The booklet is dedicated to the memory of his father and mother.

Of the dozen poems eight are in the negro dialect, which is so interesting to strangers and so dear to those who know it best. The others are written in excellent English. We quote one of each type.

MAMMY'S CHILLUN

Some folks wants lots o' chillun
A runnin' roun' about;
Dey says a home widout 'em
Is a mighty po' make-out.

But if dey had my young uns,
Dey'd sing a diff'unt song,
Dey'd say, "Good Lawd, delibbah,
An' let it be fo' long."

Ise got six pesky young uns,
Dat worries me ter deaf;
Dey don't give dere ole mammy
De time ter ketch her bref.

Dat one, he wants some 'lasses;
Dis one, he wants some bread;
One done upsot de baby
An' pitched him on his head.

Den one he gits to fightin'
Anur-r little brat;
De gal she starts ter bawlin'
Kase Joe done kill her cat.

At night it ain't no better;
It's "Come here, Mammy, please,
Kase Ben's got all de kiver,
An' I'se about ter freeze."

Sometimes dey yells aroun' me
From mornin' until night,
Unless I want some work done—
Den ain't a one in sight.

Now, all dem who wants chillun'
Jes' come and 'ply ter me;
I'll give 'em six an' pay 'em
Ter sot dere mammy free.

THE RIVER OF TIME

Time, thou deep and mystic river,
Ever rolling swiftly by,
Thou dost bear upon thy bosom
Universal destiny.

Men of every clime and nation
Sport upon thy sickly shore,
Spend one little hour, then, gathered
By the waves, are seen no more.

Kingdoms ride upon thy breakers,
Empires mount thy surges high,
Great men swim awhile thy shallows,
Play their little part—and die.

Mighty, swiftly-rolling river,
Millions on thy banks now stand,
Soon to hear the solemn summons
To the unknown spirit land.

Though threescore and ten bleak winters
Stamp their impress on the brow,
Though the step, once firm and steady,
May be slow and feeble now.

Yet, abiding hills and valleys
Mock the brief sojourn of man;
And the oldest earthly pilgrim
Is but born, in God's great plan.

Seas once lashed in wrath by Xerxes,
Hills that felt great Caesar's tread,
Mountains scaled by proud Napoleon
Still remain; but they are dead.

Aged and hoary things terrestrial
But one lesson teach—sublime:
Mortal life is but a ripple
Dancing on the stream of time.