

loquacious Negro lad. When they came to a brook the boy drove his mule in to give him a drink. When the animal had drunk what the boy thought enough although it kept on drinking, he sharply pulled up its head saying—"What you doin' dar, you done dronk 'nuff, yo'll git de colic torreckly."

This habit of personification is carried even to the inanimate things. Uncle Remus remarked to the Little Boy one day, in answer to some questions: "In dis worril lots er fokes gotter suffer fur udder fokes' sins. Look like hits mighty unwrong, but hits des dat away. Tribbalashun seems like she's waitin' roun' de cornder fur ter ketch one an' all on us, honey."

The tales are written in dialect. In this lies a great part of their effectiveness, and I realise that I am running some risk in writing about them or quoting from them in English, for they are thus robbed of much of their charm. In preserving these tales and dialect, both of which are dying out, Mr. Harris has done an inestimable service. At first one might think these tales trivial or merely amusing, but the great interest which centres about the folk-lore of a people is not found in the mere entertainment of the moment. It is the only preserved expression of uncivilized peoples. It exists before they have a written language—a literature of any description—and, most important of all, in them are preserved the characteristics of the people.

I have found this remarkably true of the Negro folk-lore. The peculiar traits of the Negro are revealed in the performances of the animals. They act and think just like the old time Negro, who is still the Negro of the rice and sugar plantation and of the dark belts of the South. The negro slave could neither read nor write, except in a few cases where masters held more advanced sentiments, when some of the most intelligent of their slaves were taught the rudiments of education. But, aside from this, the tales were the only means of expression for that peculiarly vivid imagination and that quality of mind which, under other circumstances, would mean a literature.

Mr. Harris had unusual advantages for his special work, having had every opportunity to study Negro character and dialect from his youth up. Some of the tales recorded by Mr. Harris were familiar to him from boyhood, but most of them were secured only after patient and untiring effort. The Negroes