

“THE DESERTED PLANTATION”

BY

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Oh, de grubbin’–hoe ’s a–rustin’ in de co’nah,
An’ de plow ’s a–tumblin’ down in de fiel’,
While de whippo’will ’s a–wailin’ lak a mou’nah
When his stubbo’n hea’t is tryin’ ha’d to yiel’.

In de furrers whah de co’n was allus wavin’,
Now de weeds is growin’ green an’ rank an’ tall;
An’ de swallers roun’ de whole place is a–bravin’
Lak dey thought deir folks had allus owned it all.

An’ de big house stan’s all quiet lak an’ solemn,
Not a blessed soul in pa’lor, po’ch, er lawn;
Not a guest, ner not a ca’iage lef’ to haul ‘em,
Fu’ de ones dat tu’ned de latch–string out air gone.

An’ de banjo’s voice is silent in de qua’ters,
D’ ain’t a hymn ner co’n–song ringin’ in de air;

But de murmur of a branch's passin' waters
Is de only soun' dat breks de stillness dere.

Whah 's de da'kies, dem dat used to be a-dancin'
Evry night befo' de ole cabin do'?'
Whah 's de chillun, dem dat used to be a-prancin'
Er a-rollin' in de san' er on de flo'?'

Whah 's ole Uncle Mordecai an' Uncle Aaron?
Whah 's Aunt Doshy, Sam, an' Kit, an' all de res'?'
Whah 's ole Tom de da'ky fiddlah, how 's he farin'?'
Whah 's de gals dat used to sing an' dance de bes'?'

Gone! not one o' dem is lef' to tell de story;
Dey have lef' de deah ole place to fall away.
Could n't one o' dem dat seed it in its glory
Stay to watch it in de hour of decay?

Dey have lef' de ole plantation to de swallers,
But it hol's in me a lover till de las';
Fu' I fin' hyeah in de memory dat follers
All dat loved me an' dat I loved in de pas'.

So I'll stay an' watch de deah ole place an' tend it
Ez I used to in de happy days gone by.

‘Twell de othah Mastah thinks it’s time to end it,
An’ calls me to my qua’ters in de sky.