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French Folk Material From St. Landry Parish.

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FRENCH FOLK MATERIAL FROM ST. LANDRY PARISH

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

in

The Department of English

by

Marie LaHaye
B.A., Southwestern Louisiana Institute, 1938
August, 1946
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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a collection of folk material in Negro patois, Acadian dialect, and Standard Louisiana French from Leonville and vicinity in St. Landry parish. Included are traditions, customs, sports, amusements, children's poetry and tales, songs, picturesque speech, and beliefs. Attempts have been made to discover sources, parallels, and variants in the folk literature of other states and countries.
INTRODUCTION

In selecting this topic for a thesis, I was motivated primarily by a desire to safeguard against total loss some of the folk material of a French-speaking section of St. Landry parish, namely, Leonville and vicinity. Up to this time no other attempts to explore this region for possibilities in this field have been made.

The material contained herein was gathered intermittently during a period of three years. Accounts of traditions which are no longer observed were contributed by several of the older residents of the section. The chapter on picturesque speech contains expressions the writer heard in informal conversations and recorded. The songs in patois were rendered upon request by Negro residents and taken down by the writer; the songs in the Acadian dialect and Standard French were sung by whites and mulattoes. The tales and games were likewise furnished by mulattoes in addition to school children who learned them from their parents.

In evidence, then, are the Negro patois; the Acadian dialect, which is spoken by the majority of whites; and the Standard French as seen in the large group of songs. The most popular form at the present time is the Acadian dialect, which is being adopted by the Negro as well. A threat to the survival of this dialect is not imminent, since there is
a tenacious clinging to it by even the younger generation, despite the efforts of the schools to promote the use, instead, of the English language.

To segregate the lore accumulated as a result of this project, diligence was exercised in an endeavor to include only what would be of novelty to the student of Louisiana folk lore. Care was taken to make the collection representative of the material to be found in the section. Through the use of already published material, an attempt was made, in every case, to discover possible origins and variants in the folk literature of other lands.

Faithful translations of all selections are given.
CHAPTER X

CUSTOMS, AMUSEMENTS, SPORTS OF YESTERYEAR

With no slight feeling of approbation do students with an interest in the traditions of the past read the comments of Carl Sandburg upon the value of folklore:

...it will give you something of the feel of American history, of the gloom chasers that moved many a good man who fought fire and flood, varmints and vermin, as region after region filled with settlers and homesteaders who proclaimed, "We are breaking the sod for unnumbered millions to come."  

The best approach to gaining an appreciation of the inventiveness displayed in the diversity of pastimes of our predecessors is a knowledge of the conditions which prompted these. Dull winter afternoons, days of unfavorable weather and impassable roads came to be identified with the gathering of closest neighbors around one hearth fire and the making, for instance, of popcorn balls and pecan and peanut pralines. At these times a good story-teller was highly esteemed, just as on the occasion of a wedding-feast the versatile singer whose repertoire comprised the whole gamut from the friendly mocking songs to the plaintive "romances" vir-

ually dripping with the fortunes of despairing or star-crossed lovers could not be dispensed with. To divert the wearisome sameness of the Sundays and holidays which could not be spent in work, games of various sorts were devised for all ages.

Though these amusements had for so long been transmitted through the generations, with the coming of good highways and automobiles, their decline began. In more modern times, with the growth in popularity of the entertainment spots peculiar to every American town, they gradually disappeared. In most cases, only in the more isolated districts do we find vestiges of some of these customs.

The section has always been, we may say, almost completely Catholic. There have been perhaps twenty or fewer migratory Protestant families since its settlement. Before the erection of a parish church, the journey was made on horseback or by buggy or carriage to Arnaudville or Grand Côteau, eight or ten miles distant.

As an illustration of the sincere religious faith which inspired the majority of the people, white and black, there is a true account of the old negro, M'sieu Robert, who departed on Sunday and Feast-day mornings at two or three o'clock to attend Mass in Grand Côteau. He made the trip in a cow-drawn cart, the wooden wheels of which could be heard clattering acres away and which he had to sprinkle with water whenever he feared that they were becoming too hot. On his return, stopping near a small grocery store, he would buy
crackers and then milk his cows for his morning meal before resuming his ride.

Those families who were in comfortable circumstances educated their daughters at the Convent of the Sacred Heart, Grand Côteau, a school founded in 1821 by the Religious of the Sacred Heart, and their boys at the Jesuit College in the same town.

The Father's Blessing on New Year's Day

Among the pious practices in the homes of the more enlightened was the bestowing of the father's blessing on his children on "le jour de l'an." As they knelt before him in a group, heads bowed, he extended his hands and, using a special prayer, invoked God's protection upon them for the ensuing year.

It is interesting to note in Joseph Médard Carrière's Tales from the French Folk-Lore of Missouri his report of the same custom which was in existence in the 90's among the Missouri Creoles.²

"Courir Mardi Gras"--Masquerading

Riding horseback or walking, bands of maskers, led by their captains, went from house to house on Shrove Tuesday or a few days preceding, singing:

² Joseph Médard Carrière, Tales from the French Folk-Lore of Missouri (Chicago: Northwestern University, 1937), p. 6.
HenJour, maitre et la maîtresse,
Aussi les jolies filles,
Les mardi gras sont venus
Demander la charité;
La charité, maîtresse,
Maîtresse, la charité;
Les mardi gras sont venus
Demander la charité.

Good-day, Master and Mistress,
Also the pretty girls,
The masqueraders have come
To ask for charity;
Charity, Mistress,
Mistress, charity;
The masqueraders have come
To ask for charity.

Eagerly they went into a dance, and this over, the
mistress of the household gave them "une petite récompense"
for their performance, which was permission to catch a
chicken in the backyard for the gumbo which the maskers were
to enjoy on the same night. If the lady had no "basse-cour"
(poultry yard), she showed her appreciation by making a con-
tribution, usually monetary, to their entertainment fund.

The good humor of the band was assured by the captain,
who had the privilege of using his horse-whip on unruly
maskers in order to enforce good manners.

In regard to this tradition our attention is again
called to the studies of Carrière. Here is his account of a
custom which appears analogous in many respects to the local
tradition which I have recorded:

On New Year's Eve, a group of men and youths,
clad in eccentric costumes, and with blackened
faces, spend the whole evening going from house
to house. When they enter a house, their leader
takes his fiddle, and strikes up the tune of the
lively carol of the "Guillonnée."
Bonjour le maître et la maîtresse
et tout le monde du logis!
Pour le dernier jour de l'année,
C'est la guillonnée vous nous devez.
Si vous voulez rien nous donner,
Dites-nous lèe,
On vous demand'ra seulement une
chînée.

The other members of the group sing to his accompaniment the five stanzas of the song and shuffle their feet. As soon as the carol is over, the hosts serve drinks and cakes. Formerly, the carolers collected offerings, money or provisions, for the king's ball on Twelfth Night, but as the ball is no longer held, they have done away with the collection. This custom and the song which was inseparable from it were the most popular of all French traditions and songs throughout the upper Mississippi Valley.

"Demander les Consentements"

A custom still observed by many Negroes contemplating matrimony is that of going to all the relatives to announce their intentions and to invite them for the ceremony. The expression, "Demander les consentements," is simply a blandishment, for they do not in reality ask the consent of the kin. However, it is recognized that a breach of this etiquette would be resented by the relations.

Those members of the family, no matter how distant, who are held in high regard are invited to the bride's home to partake of the "dessert," consisting of wine, "anisette" (anisette), and the cakes decorated with thick, hard icing.

multicolored hard candies and gum drops, and sprinkled over with tiny anise seeds. The bridal cake for this festival is unique, being sometimes four feet in height and made by placing cakes of varying sizes one on top of the other, with a broomstick or similar support inserted through the middle. The foundation layers are usually baked in dishpans of graduated sizes, the regular cake-plate size appearing only at the summit of the bridal cake.

"La Cuisine"

"Les grains de tac-tac qui ne fleurissaient pas s'appelaient les griots." These "griots" of pop corn were ground into a flour called "la farine froide," which could be utilised in the preparation of several dishes. Mixed with butter, it could be spread on bread; or, it could be made into cookies.

"Le van" was a large tray, usually square in shape, woven from slender wild cane reeds. It was used as a receptacle into which flour could be sifted or into which cookies were placed before being baked.

Containers for lard were made from beffskins, the opening of which was fastened by means of a rope inserted through slits made all along the edge.

"Les Jeux"

On Sundays, favorable weather permitting, out-of-door games of various kinds were held. At these "jeux".
which sometimes lasted all day, gumbo, cake, and refreshments were served.

The "Pategau"

The men gathered at a spot near the edge of the woods for the "pategau" (popinjay) shooting. Attached to a pole or steel rod which revolved was the target, a piece of wood, usually the root of a gum tree, that had been carved to resemble a bird. The "pategau" was painted in several colors: for example, the wing, red; the tail, blue; the head, green; etc. On each of these parts a prize was set. Thus, the one successful in scoring a hit in the head (or shooting it off, depending upon the arrangements) was awarded a sack of rice; the wing, a sack of coffee. The body always brought the most valuable return, such as a barrel of flour or a sum of money.

At the beginning of the tournament, each contestant paid a certain fee to the one responsible for planning the affair and could thus stand in line to try his skill until the last part had been shot.

W. A. Read has traced the origin of the name "pategau" to the popular substitution of the French "patte," "paw," or "foot" of a bird, for the "pape" in "papegai," a word designating a wooden target constructed in the shape of a bird, which furnished amusement to the French settlers and which survived for many generations in the rural districts of
From the vivid and varied colors of the "pategau" has developed the expression, "Habillé comme un pategau," which describes a person wearing all of his finery on one occasion.

"Arracher la Tête du Zoie"

Another attraction at the Sunday "jeux" was called "arracher la tête du zoie" (de l'oie). A goose was suspended from the limb of a tree, head pointing downward. Contestants, one by one, riding by fast on horseback, grabbed at the goose to try to pull off the head. Whoever achieved success received the goose as a reward.

The "Papabotte" Hunt

A favorite sport until about 1895 was hunting "papabottes," large, long-legged birds resembling chickens, which are classified by Read as Upland Fowers or Bartramian Sandpipers. The Louisiana-French name, "papabotte," he says, is a mimicking of the cry of the birds.

Since the habitat of the "papabotte" was near water, the chief hunting ground was in the prairie where one found "platins" or flat, damp terrain. The hunter was accompanied by an ox which he had trained for this purpose. As the ox grazed, the man was led directly to the flock of birds. To

5 Ibid., p. 55.
make sure that the "papabottes" would not be frightened, the hunter followed cautiously, concealing himself behind the ever as he advanced to shoot.

The birds were strung up in the kitchen or hung from rafters in the attic and eaten only when the necks became blue and broke off easily. The dish, "papabotte faisandé," was considered a delicacy.

Read tells of the variety of ways in which the "papabotte" was prepared in the New Orleans restaurants. It appeared on the menu as "Papabotte à la Créole" (Français Créole), "Papabotte Grillé," "broiled papabotte" and "Papabotte Rôti," "roast papabotte."6

Since these birds were generally very fat, it is not unusual, even nowadays, for a stout person to be likened to one, in the characteristic friendly teasing manner: "Mais, elle est grosse comme un papabotte!"

The Raccoon Hunt

At certain seasons the raccoons, "chacouis," were so numerous and the damage they did was so great that the farmers had to stay awake all night to guard their corn fields. Their dogs were trained to pursue the animals, causing them to run up trees. With the aid of torches made of pine knots, the men were able to see the eyes of the raccoons in order to shoot them.

Blowgun Hunting

The "sarbacanes," blowguns, which were used by many in hunting, were large bamboo canes, "cannes sauvages," the knots of which were burned out from the inside with red-hot iron rods. The "flèche" was an umbrella rib. Part of this shaft, sometimes the whole length, up to the finely-sharpened point, was wrapped around with fluffy cotton held in place by a string, and it was inserted into the cane. The force of the hunter's breath impelled the arrow in the intended direction.

The size of the blowgun and the shaft used depended upon the type of game sought; to kill small birds, for instance, the cotton enveloped nearly the entire length of the shaft, so that they would not be too badly mutilated.

"Les Carnassières"

The hunting bags were made from the skins of wildcats ("chats-tigres"), which the men trapped.

"Danses-Rondes"

In his collection of singing games, John Harrington Cox has this to say of their function: "Singing games have had a long and honorable history among English-speaking peoples and have played no small part in their social structure." To no lesser degree in the French-speaking sections

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of Louisiana have these games contributed to the same end.
During Lent, especially, when dancing was not customary, the young men and young ladies of sixteen years or older enjoyed "Danses-Rondes" in the late afternoons and evenings.

"Papillon Vole et Vole et Vole"

One of the best-known of these ring games is called "Papillon Vole et Vole et Vole." Holding hands, the players form a ring and begin walking around it. Meanwhile the girls sing:

Dessus ces arbres il y a des branches,
Dessus ces branches il y a des feuilles,
Dessus ces feuilles il y a des fleurs,
Dessus ces fleurs il y a des papillons;
Papillon vole et vole et vole.
Papillon vole et vole et vole.

The boys sing:

Les belles n'en veulent pas de moi,
Et tant qu'à les vilaines, j' n'en veux pas.
Papillon vole et vole et vole.

The girls sing:

On these trees are branches,
On these branches are leaves,
On these leaves are flowers,
On these flowers are butterflies;
Butterfly fly and fly and fly.
Butterfly fly and fly and fly.

The boys sing:

The beautiful girls do not want me,
And as for the unsightly ones, I won't have them.
Butterfly fly and fly and fly.

When the final words "Papillon vole et vole et vole" are sung, each player hurriedly selects a partner of the opposite sex. If there is an odd number of players, the un-
The fortunate one left without a partner is laughed at.

"Un Beau Rosier"

The boy or girl who plays the part of the "rosier" follows the instructions in the song.

A ma main droite je porte un beau rosier,
Qui porte roses au mois de mai,
Qui porte roses au mois de mai.
Non beau rosier, entrez en danse
Et saluez qui vous plaira,
Et saluez qui vous plaira.

Embrassez-la, mon beau rosier,
Qui porte roses au mois de mai,
Qui porte roses au mois de mai.

Sortez du rond mon beau rosier,
Qui porte roses au mois de mai,
Qui porte roses au mois de mai.

In my right hand I carry a beautiful rose-bush
Which bears roses in the month of May,
Which bears roses in the month of May.
My beautiful rose-bush enter the ring
And salute whoever pleases you,
And salute whoever pleases you.

Kiss her (him), my beautiful rose-bush,
Which bears roses in the month of May,
Which bears roses in the month of May.

Leave the ring, my beautiful rose-bush,
Which bears roses in the month of May,
Which bears roses in the month of May.

"L'Amour Entrez en Rond"

The players form a circle. A boy and a girl are selected to represent "l'amour." When the first words are sung, they take their places in the center of the ring. While the rest continue singing, the couple obeys each instruction given.
L'amour entrez en rond,
L'amour entrez en rond,
Par les jeux d'amourette,
Par les jeux d'amour.

L'amour asseyez-vous,
L'amour asseyez-vous,
Par les jeux d'amourette,
Par les jeux d'amour.

L'amour agenouillez-vous,
L'amour agenouillez-vous,
Par les jeux d'amourette,
Par les jeux d'amour.

L'amour caresses-vous,
L'amour caresses-vous,
Par les jeux d'amourette,
Par les jeux d'amour.

L'amour embrassez-vous,
L'amour embrassez-vous,
Par les jeux d'amourette,
Par les jeux d'amour.

L'amour levez-vous,
L'amour levez-vous,
Par les jeux d'amourette,
Par les jeux d'amour.

L'amour sortez en rond,
L'amour sortez en rond,
Par les jeux d'amourette,
Par les jeux d'amour.

Love, come into the ring,
Love, come into the ring,
In these games of love affairs,
In these games of love.

Love, sit down,
Love, sit down,
In these games of love affairs,
In these games of love.

Love, kneel down,
Love, kneel down,
In these games of love affairs,
In these games of love.
Love, bestow caresses upon each other,
In these games of love affairs,
In these games of love.

Love, kiss each other,
In these games of love affairs,
In these games of love.

Love, stand up,
In these games of love affairs,
In these games of love.

Love, leave the center of the ring,
In these games of love affairs,
In these games of love.

"La Louisianette"

In this "danse-ronde," the couple stands in the center
and follows the bidding of those singing.

La Louisianette est si jolie,
Que sa taille vous lui faites le tour;
Je parie que vous l'aimez;
Vous lui faites la cour;
Laissez chanter la Louisianette;
Embrassez donc la Louisianette;
La Louisianette est si jolie.

Louisianette is so pretty
That you put your arm around her waist;
I bet you like her;
You court her;
Let Louisianette sing;
Then kiss Louisianette;
Louisianette is so pretty.

"Si Tu Veux T'Marier Avec Moi"

The players form two lines facing each other, the
boys on one side, the girls on the other. As the boys sing,
they advance toward the girls. When the girls decline each
time as the "proposal" is presented, the boys retreat. At the end, when the girls decide to "marry for money" and accept the boys, both lines move forward, and the couples hold hands and march around in a circle.

The boys:

_ Je te donnerai mon beau chien blanc.
  Si tu veux t' marier avec moi.
  Si tu veux t' marier avec moi, moi, moi.
  Si tu veux t' marier avec moi.

The girls:

_ J' accepterais pas ton beau chien blanc.
  J' me marierais pas avec toi.
  J' me marierais pas avec toi, toi, toi.
  J' me marierais pas avec toi.

The boys:

_ Je te donnerai ta robe de noce.
  Toute ourlée en fil d'argent.
  Si tu veux t' marier avec moi, moi, moi.
  Si tu veux t' marier avec moi.

The girls:

_ J' accepterais pas ma robe de noce.
  Toute ourlée en fil d'argent.
  J' me marierais pas avec toi, toi, toi.
  J' me marierais pas avec toi.

The boys:

_ Je te donnerai la clef de mon coffre.
  Tout mon or et mon argent.
  Si tu veux t' marier avec moi, moi, moi.
  Si tu veux t' marier avec moi.

The girls:

_ J' accepterais bien la clef de ton coffre.
  Tout ton or et ton argent.
  J' me marierais bien avec toi, toi, toi.
  J' me marierais bien avec toi.
The boys:

"My fine white dog I'll give to you,
If you consent to marry me,
If you consent to marry me, me, me,
If you consent to marry me."

The girls:

"Your fine white dog I shan't accept,
I shan't consent to marry you,
I shan't consent to marry you, you, you,
I shan't consent to marry you."

The boys:

"Your wedding dress I'll give to you,
All finely hemmed in threads of gold,
If you consent to marry me, me, me,
If you consent to marry me."

The girls:

"My wedding dress I shan't accept,
All finely hemmed in threads of gold,
I shan't consent to marry you, you, you,
I shan't consent to marry you."

The boys:

"The key to my chest I'll give to you,
All my silver and all my gold,
If you consent to marry me, me, me,
If you consent to marry me."

The girls:

"The key to your chest I shall accept,
All your silver and gold,
I will consent to marry you, you, you,
I will consent to marry you."

That English variants of this game are extant is proved by the collection of singing games by J. H. Cox, which has already been mentioned. He includes three texts of a game entitled "I Will Give You a Paper of Pins," a fourth version which has not been given a title, and a
lengthy list of references where the same game may be found. Among the versions mentioned are those from Illinois, North Carolina, England, and Scotland.

For the sake of comparison to the French version known in the section of which I write, a few stanzas which bear the closest similarity are cited. This version of "I'll Give You a Paper of Pins" was contributed to Mr. Cox by Mrs. Hilary G. Richardson, Clarksburg, Harrison County, 1917.

1. "I'll give to you a paper of pins, If that's the way that love begins, If you will marry me—me—me, If you will marry me, Miss."

2. "I'll not accept your paper of pins, If that's the way that love begins, And I'll not marry you—you—you, And I'll not marry you, Sir."

7. "I'll give to you a dress of red, Brodered round with a golden thread."

13. "I'll give to you the key of my chest, That you may have money at your request."

14. "I will accept the key of your chest, That I may have money at my own request, And I will marry you—you—you, And I will marry you, Sir."8

8 Ibid., pp. 226-227.
CHAPTER II
"CHEZ LES ENFANTS"

Many of the white children had as part-time nurses good Negresses in whose care the white mothers could entrust their children. From the whites these faithful guardians had learned to observe rules for healthful living and to speak a more "civilised" tongue than their negro brothers. However, despite some measure of external refinement, these Negresses always revealed vestiges of their early characteristics. Most conspicuous among these was the faculty of a vivid and colorful imagination.

The children, whose devotion to their "keepers" was remarkable, continuing even into adult life, manifested on certain occasions gleeful amusement in annoying them to the point of irritation. To inspire good deportment, then, and often, under provocation, to enforce it upon their charges, the nurses invented bugabooos of divers forms and made even more appalling those fanciful creations already in existence.

One of these whom the youngsters knew was "le nègre maroon," the runaway Negro, who lived in the wilds of the "ile," a small wood nearby. He had only one eye, and that in the middle of the forehead. Preying upon all children, and especially the bad ones, he carried a "sac de pite," a burlap bag, into which he put them to take them off.
"Madame Grands-Doigts" was the lady with the extremely long fingers, so adept in plucking children from their cozy nests.

"Le caracoué" and "la bëche" were also to be feared by the children, for they were composites of the most terrifying of all creatures. A variety of descriptions was given of them.

On New Year's Eve it was the "Crichequine" whom "les mauvais enfants" could expect. It was she who rewarded them for all the disquietude they had caused their parents. As they lay tucked in their beds, she lacerated their heels with pieces of broken glass!

Indoor Recreation

A person interested in folk traditions who has had some experience with children will corroborate this statement made by B. A. Botkin:

One of the most fascinating fields for the student of beliefs and customs as these enter into the vernacular poetry of folk rhymes is the jingles and doggerels of childhood. The persistence and diffusion of such rhymes in infinite variety and yet in much the same form all over the world offers conclusive evidence of the twin aspects of tradition, especially the tradition of children—its inventiveness and its conservatism.¹

The children of every nation and every age have had their nonsensical recitations, "catches," rhymes, scrambled sentences, riddles, and tongue twisters. Research into the

¹ Botkin, op. cit., p. 768.
children's poetry of other lands will reveal types which closely resemble those of the French-speaking children of Southwestern Louisiana.

In the case of the "counting out" rhymes, for instance, we note that a feature common to them is that they are all more or less meaningless or senseless. Botkin's reflection upon this relationship is that it "implies a very great antiquity" and that Shakespeare and Sidney probably "directed their childish sports by the very same rhymes which are still employed for this purpose." He observes further that "their liability to variation is so great that phrases totally different in sound and apparent sense may at any time be developed out of them."2

One of the appealing "counting out" rhymes, or ways of determining who is to be "it" in a game, is the following. A sing-song voice is employed in its recitation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>French</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Un et deux</td>
<td>One and two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Et trois et quatre,</td>
<td>And three and four,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deux moulins</td>
<td>Two mills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qui doivent se battre;</td>
<td>Which are to fight;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qu'on appelle</td>
<td>Let them call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jean-Simon</td>
<td>Jean-Simon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jean-Simon</td>
<td>Jean-Simon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Du Carencro.</td>
<td>Of Carencro.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 Ibid., pp. 769-770.
Va te faire souler
Chez Jean-Simon,
Jean-Simon
Du Carencro.

Go have your meal ground
At Jean-Simon's,
Jean-Simon
Of Carencro.

Two children participate in the following dialogue which provides some merriment for the one who has not been introduced to it. The words are not far removed from the 1937 version of "Knock, Knock, Who's There?" of the "smart" young generation of today. The initial words are accompanied by two loud knocks on the table or wall.

Geume, geume.       Knock, knock.
Qui est là?        Who's there?
C'est mon, Dé-Dé.   It's I, Dé-Dé.
Qu'est Dé-Dé?      Which Dé-Dé?
Dé-Dé La Ca.        Dé-Dé La Ca.
Qu'est La Ca?      Which La Ca?
La Ca Coq.      La Ca Rooster.
Qu'est Coq?        Which Rooster?
Coq Sans Bas.     Rooster Without Stockings.
Qu'est Sans Bas?  Which Without Stockings?
Sans Bas Côté.   Without Stockings on the Side.
Qu'est Côté?      Which Side?
Côté chez toi!      Side o' your house!

The ensuing rhymes are recited in sprightly voice.
The first is the "Humpty-Dumpty" of Bayou Têche. The second
recalls to our minds the "Salt, vinegar, mustard, pie, and
(sayenne) pepper!" of the present day.

Pierre Cyprière
A sauté la barrière
Pour aller joindre Jean-Pierre.
Il a tombé dans l'église,
A fendu ses paupières
En mille poussière.

Hém! Hém!
J'aime
De la crème,
Des brèmes,
Et des siblèmes!

Pierre Cyprière
Jumped the fence
To join Jean-Pierre.
He fell in the cemetery.
And burst his eyelids
Into a thousand particles.

Hém! Hém!
I like
Cream,
Eggplants,
And squash!

The object is to say the following words very rapidly
and thereby puzzle the one who is trying to distinguish the
meaning:

Homme debout lit; A man who is standing reads;
Femme assis coud; A lady who is seated sews;
Un enfant assis joue. A child who is seated plays.

A child who, with the words, "Moi, j'suis un homme"
("I'm a man"), tries to impress upon people that he is
stronger than his years would very likely hear this belittling retort:

Homme de paille You're a man of straw,
Pistolet de bois With a wooden pistol
Balles de bœuf And mud bullets!
For many centuries riddles have been relegated to the "folk." French-speaking Louisianians, too, have produced their share of these, which nowadays, however, are an entertainment only for the children. The watermelon, the broom, the cotton plant, the iron kettle, all have been subjects about which riddles were composed. As examples of the types in existence, three are listed.

Haut mâle, High up,
Court habillé, Briefly dressed,
Qui fait les jeunes Making young
Et les vieux trotter. And old trot.
(Une cloche d'église) (A church bell)

Est-ce que tu connais quelque chose qui fait plus d' train (bruit) qu'un 'tit cochon pris dans la barrière?
(Deux)

Do you know something that makes more noise than a little pig caught in the fence?
(Two)

Une 'tite maison blanche est dans une 'tite maison verte. Dans la 'tite maison blanche il y a une 'tite maison rouge. Dans la 'tite maison rouge il y a une 'tite maison noire. Devine mon nom.
(Un melon d'eau)
A little white house is within a little green house. Inside the little white house is a little red house. Within the little red house is a little black house. What is my name?
(Watermelon)

Tongue Twisters

Ton thé a-t-il été ta toux?
Your tea did it relieve your cough?

Trois petites pipes fines françaises dans un petit panier fin français.

Three fine little French pipes in a fine little French basket.

Minette

Of singular charm for the very young child is the "Minette" story. The ability to relate without pause the adventures which proceed from the theft of the little wheels by the kitten bearing what was originally the most popular name for cats is an occasion for righteous pride.

Un jour je jouais avec Minette;
Minette a volé mes roulettes.
Je dis à Minette, "Rends-moi mes roulettes."
Minette répond, "Non, j' te donnerai pas tes roulettes sans du lait."
Je demande du lait à la vache;
La vache me dit, "Non, j' te donnerai pas du lait sans du foin."
Je demande du foin à la faux;
La faux me dit, "Non, j' te donnerai pas du foie sans du lard."
Je demande du lard au cochon;
Le cochon me dit, "J' te donnerai pas du lard sans des glands."
Je demande des glands au chêne;
Le chêne me dit, "Non, j' te donnerai pas des glands sans du vent."
Je demande du vent à la mer;
La mer m'a venté;
J'ai venté le chêne;
Le chêne m'a glanté;
J'ai glanté le cochon;
Le cochon m'a lardé;
J'ai lardé la faux;
La faux m'a feinté;
J'ai feinté la vache;
La vache m'a laité;
J'ai laité Minette;
Minette m'a rendu mes roulettes.

One day I played with Minette;
Minette stole my little wheels.
I said, "Minette, give me back my little wheels."
Minette answered, "No, I won't give back your little wheels unless you give me milk."
I asked the cow for milk.
The cow said, "No, I won't give you milk unless you give me hay."
I asked the scythe for hay.
The scythe said, "No, I won't give you hay unless you give me lard."
I asked the pig for lard.
The pig said, "No, I won't give you lard unless you give me acorns."
I asked the oak tree for acorns.
The oak tree said, "I won't give you acorns unless you give me wind."
I asked the sea for wind.
The sea gave me wind.
I gave the oak tree wind.
The oak gave me acorns.
I gave the pig acorns.
The pig gave me lard.
I gave the scythe lard.
The scythe gave me hay.
I gave the cow hay.
The cow gave me milk.
I gave Minette milk.
Minette gave back my little wheels.
J. M. Carrière has recorded a Missouri variant of the same little story, in which "Minette" is the little sister instead. This is his English summary of it.

Minette will not return her brother's little wheels unless he gives her some milk. The boy goes to ask the cow for milk, the cow asks him for hay, the scythe will not cut hay unless it is greased with pig's fat, the pig insists on getting acorns first, the oak tree asks for a stick to beat them down, the stick refuses to do it. But when the boy calls upon the fire to burn the stick, the stick beats down acorns, the pig eats them, and so on until the boy gets his wheels back.3

Indoor Games

At one time it was a custom for several families to meet at various homes for the "veillée" which began in the early evening and lasted until early hours of the morning. While the grown-ups chatted or played cards, the children sat on the floor and amused themselves with little games.

One of the best loved of these, called "Pan-Pi-Po," has some similarity to "Senie-Weenie-Minie-Mo," the old counting-out rhyme, which all American English-speaking children are familiar with. The children place one finger upon the floor, forming a circle. The leader, with his own, touches each finger, pronouncing each time one syllable from these words:

Pan-pi-po, Saint Laurent,
La 'tite souris demande du pain.
S'il y en a
T'en auras;
S'il y en a pas,
Tu t'en passeras.

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3 Carrière, op. cit., p. 310.
Va faire bouillir
Ton peau (cruche) de lait
Chez Madame Acrédère Maille.

Pan-pi-po, Saint Laurent,
The little mouse begs bread.
If there is some,
You'll get a piece,
If there is none,
You'll do without.
We have boiled
Your pitcher of milk
At Mrs. Acrédère Maille's.

The unlucky one upon whom the formula ends must retire. In the meantime each of the remaining children selects the name of some animal as his own, and together they assign one to the absent child, not letting him know of it.

The leader then cries, "O, Pistachio, la pirogue est arrivée." (Oh, Pistachio, the pirogue has arrived.)

The child who has gone out asks, "Qu'est-ce qu'elle a porté?" ("What has it brought?")

"Un mouton, une vache, un cheval, un éléphant..." ("A sheep, a cow, a horse, an elephant...") All the animals are named. "Sur quel tu veux venir?" ("On which do you wish to come?")

The child who has been addressed selects one name, and if it happens to be his own, he is told, "Viens sur tes pattes." ("Come on your own feet.") If it is another's, he is asked: "Plume ou paille?" ("Feather or straw?") If he answers, "Plume," he is pulled back into the group by the ear; if "Paille," by the hair, or vice versa, depending upon
what is in the mind of the child who is to conduct him. The game always ends very hilariously.

"Monte Schelle"

To play this game, the children double up their hands into fists, placing them alternately one on top of the other. Beginning at the bottom, the leader touches each finger saying, "Monte Schelle; monte-la; 'tit trou; casse cou" ("Climb the ladder; climb it; little hole; break-neck"), until the top is reached.

Each person then removes his hands and imitates whatever the leader is doing while he says the following:

"Roule, roule, 'tit baril; celui qui rit, celui qui parle, en l'appelle macaque (on lui donne une tape)." ("Roll, roll little barrel; the one who laughs, the one who talks, we'll call a monkey" or "we'll give a sound smack.")

Accordingly, whoever breaks the silence imposed by laughing or talking must "play the monkey" and do the bidding of the majority, or he must endure the corporal punishment inflicted. The duration of the game is contingent upon the self-control of the players.

"Pattes de Bœufs"

The leader places his hand, palm downward, on the table. The next player lays his on top, striking hard as he does so. Each in turn follows the preceding player.

The leader then removes his hand from the bottom and with it smites the top hand. The others follow the procedure,
Since the game finally ends in a general scuffle as each tries to outdo his predecessor in the force of the slap he gives, we can understand the second reason for the name "Oxen Hooves."

"Siméon Dit"

"Siméon dit il faut aller" is spoken by the leader, who, meanwhile, telling the players to copy his actions, rubs his fingers, palm downward, in a circular motion on the table. When he says, "Siméon dit il faut arrêter," all stop. Some who know the game try to trick the uninitiated into stopping, by interrupting from time to time with, "Allen arrêter." Because, then, "Siméon" has not been named, those who stop the movement are administered a sound "pichenette," fillip, on the forehead. The game continues until all are aware of the hoax.

"Mémère Est Morte"

All the players sit on chairs grouped around in a semi-circle. The player on one end says, "Mémère est morte" ("Grandma's dead"). The second player asks, "Comment elle est morte?" ("How did she die?") The first answers, "Comme ça" ("Like that"), and begins to tap his left foot on the floor. This is relayed by the second person to the third player, who in turn gives the message to the next, and so on until everyone is tapping his left foot. The first player
again calls the attention of the one seated next to him to the news that "Grandma is dead." This time, upon being asked the manner of her death, he replies, "Like this," and taps his right foot on the floor, continuing also the initial movement. This is transmitted to the rest of the players who imitate the first one. The game continues with the first player announcing each time, "Némère est morte," and indicating the manner of her death by patting his right hand on his right knee, patting his left hand on his left knee, nodding his head vigorously, and finally rising from his chair to continue the procedure. When the last player is performing all these antics, the game ends.

"Quelle Couleur!"

Holding secretly behind his back a thimbleful of water, the captain announces that he is thinking of a color. He asks, "Quelle couleur?" Each player in turn guesses the color. When one gives the correct answer, the captain rewards him by throwing the water into his face.

"Assis Sur la Sellette"

The players sit in a circle around the room. One occupies a seat in the center. The leader, whispering to one player, accuses someone in the group of having made a remark about the one in the center, and the information is relayed to each player in the same manner. When all know who the person is, the leader addresses the one in the center who has
not been told the secret: "On dit que t'es assis sur la sellette parce que tu ressembles à un macaque. Qui a dit que t'es assis sur la sellette parce que tu ressembles à un macaque?" ("Someone has said that you are sitting on the culprit's seat because you resemble a monkey. Who has said that you are sitting on the culprit's seat because you resemble a monkey?") The player guesses, and if he is correct, he may change places with the one who called him a monkey.

"Cache, Cache la Bague"

Each player clasps his hands together. The leader holds a ring between his own clasped hands and goes from one player to the next, each time pretending to drop the ring into the players' hands, but in reality giving it to one. While so doing, he says each time, "Cache, cache la bague; tu l'auras; tu l'auras pas." ("Hide, hide the ring; you will get it; you will not get it.") When the procedure is over, he addresses one player, "Qui a la bague?" ("Who has the ring?") If the player guesses correctly, he may replace the leader. If not, the leader asks each one until the holder of the ring is revealed.

Oiseau Vole

The players, seated, form a circle. One who has been named leader begins by saying, "Oiseau vole," at which all players must simultaneously lift their right hands off their laps, index fingers pointing outward. The leader con-
continues rapidly, naming various birds, animals, or objects; e.g., "Canard vole," "Éléphant vole," "Chaise vole," etc. The object is to confuse the players into lifting a finger at the wrong time. If a child fails to make the proper movement when a correct statement is made or moves when the statement is false, he must pay a forfeit. Usually this is in the form of a "pichemette," fillip, on the forehead.

"Mariage"

This requires four players, two of whom must not know the game. These two are asked if they would like to play "marriage" and are named bride and groom. One of those who knew the game impersonates the priest, another becomes the attendant. The bride and groom kneel before the priest, who, after some ceremony, addresses the bride, "Tu vas garder Jacques pour ton mari?" ("Will you take Jacques for your lawful spouse?") To the groom, he asks, "Tu vas garder Corinne pour ta femme?" ("Do you take Corinne for your lawful wife?") This finished, they are told to kiss, and as they lean toward each other, the attendant grasps the groom's feet and pulls him backward, causing him "to kiss the floor."

"Tire Laitlette"

The game "Tire Laitlette" is the counterpart of "Blindman's Bluff." We note the only adjunct in the words spoken over and over by the leader: "Tire laitlette," and
the blindman who answers: "Mène-moi drouette (droit)."

"Tire laitlette" is equivalent in meaning to "milk the cow." "Tirer" is used in dialect instead of the French form "traire," "to draw milk"; e.g., "Il a tiré la vache."

"Laitlette" is an infantine term for the noun "milk."

"La Petite Boîte à Manon"

One comes into the room saying, "J'ai la petite boîte à Manon qui contient trois choses: l'amitié, embrasser, et congédier." ("I have Manon's little box which contains three things: love, kissing, and dismissal.")

All together, the boys and girls ask: "Qui aimes-vous?" He then points to the one he loves. They ask: "Qui embrassez-vous?" He kisses the girl. "Qui congédiez-vous?" ("When do you dismiss?") He points to the girl, and she goes back to her place.

Outdoor Recreation

Fishing "Trououlous"

An absorbing pastime for youngsters was to search backyards for the tiny holes in the ground in which dwelt the "trououlous." Using a broom straw, the end of which held a minute dab of mud, the children spent long minutes endeavoring to entice the insect out of the hole. If they were rewarded with a slight movement of the straw, proof that the
"trouloulou" was inside, they slowly and cautiously pulled up the straw in order to get a glimpse of this mysterious creature whose bite was believed to be "very poisonous."

From Read we learn that the "trouloulou" designates the Fiddler Crab in places near the seacoast, whereas the name denotes, to Acadians living farther inland, the larva of a tiger beetle. He traces the forms "trouloulou," "touleulou," which are all used in Louisiana, to a corruption of the "French 'Tourlourou,' 'foot soldier,'" by "'r'-metathesis" as shown by the first form, and "assimilation of the 'l---l' to 'l--l.'"4

A Fête

"Baptême-Catin"—the Christening of the Dolls

For days in advance, the little mulatto and negro girls began preparations for dressing their "catins," ("dolls," "toy babies," in the patois sense) in the most extravagant "baptismal robes" possible. Each "mother" selected a "godfather" and a "godmother" for her child. One man was appointed or volunteered to officiate as "priest."

The "baptême-catin" meant a day of gaiety for the elder generations as well. Since the most appropriate shady spot was selected, it was always ideal for serving a picnic dinner, including chicken, dressing, and salad. Drinks,

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4 Read, op. cit., 74.
cake, ice cream, pralines were served on request throughout the fête. Games of various kinds were an all-day attraction for all ages.

Following the "rites," the "congregation" went from one "baby" to the other, admiring the handiwork of its dress and paying compliments to the "mothers." The dolls exhibited were of all sizes, ranging from a pathetic length of three or four inches to the dimensions of a live baby.

Outdoor Games

"Trainé, Trainé, la Savate"

This game is very similar to the one known to English-speaking children as "Drop the Handkerchief," except that in place of a handkerchief a large piece of cloth which has been twisted and tied to resemble a "tail" is used. The leader runs around the ring, saying, "Trainé, trainé, la savate, 'tit la queue mouton coupée." ("Drag, drag, the old shoe, little tail of the lamb is cut.") The players answer, "Baa, baa." Secretively, the leader drops the "queue" behind one player, who, when he perceives it, grabs the tail, runs around the ring, chasing the leader until the latter resumes the place left vacant. The "tail" can be used to chastise any player, who, having dropped it, is overtaken before he has reached a vacancy.

"Mes Enfants, Mes Enfants, J' Vous Appelle"

The mother permits the children to play in the garden.
Instead they go to their grandmother’s. Noticing their disappearance, she calls them, saying, "J’vas envoyer mes chiens derrière vous autres." ("I’ll send my dogs after you.")

They scream, "On t’entend pas!" ("We don’t hear you!") She replies, "J’vas envoyer ma vache vous chercher." ("I’ll send my cow after you.") Again they shout, "On t’entend pas!"

The mother names successively several things that she will send to convey them back, but each time they give the same answer. Finally, when she threatens to send her whip or herself, they come running back, endeavoring to reach "home" before she can "use her whip" on them.

The mother asks, "Où vous autres a été?" ("Where did you go?") They answer, "Chez Mémère." ("At Grandma’s.") The dialogue continues with "Quoi vous autres a fait?" ("What did you do?")

"Fourni le plancher." ("Scrubbed the floor.")
"Quoi elle vous a donné?" ("What did she give you?")
"Dix sous," or "Cinquante piastres." Each child names a different amount.

"Où tu l’as mis?" ("Where did you put it?")
"Dans l’ grenier." ("In the loft.")
"Si j’ casse mon cou en allant l’ chercher, vous autres va rire ou pleurer?" ("If I break my neck to go get the money, will you laugh or cry?") The mother runs after the children who say "Laugh" and uses the whip on them.
"Ten-ti-on-ton"

La mère mouton
Les petits moutons
La vieille diablesse

The mother sheep is sitting on the ground with her lambs around her. Soon they see the old witch approaching. She is carrying a stick. Kneeling on one knee, she says, "Ten-ti-on-ton." The mother answers, "Tombez, levez." The procedure is repeated every few steps, and the same words are spoken.

When she is close enough, the old witch pretends to cry. "Quoi (Qu'est-ce que) tu veux?" ("What do you want?") asks the mother.

"J' veux un 'tit mouton." ("I want a lamb.")

"Quoi t'as fait avec cela (celui) que j' t'ai donné hier?" ("What did you do with the one I gave you yesterday?") continues the mother.

"Mais, j'ai été au bayou pour laver du grué (gruau), et il a tombé dans l'eau et a noyé." ("I went to wash some grits in the bayou, and he fell in and drowned.")

The mother refuses to give another lamb, saying, "Retourne chez toi. T'en auras pas."

The witch begins to cry anew and walks slowly away. When the sobs grow louder and louder, the mother recalls her.

"Viens. J' vas t'en donner un autre. Choisis cela (celui que) tu veux." ("Choose the one you want.")

With her stick, she touches each lamb, smelling the
the end of the stick. Her face registers distaste as she goes from one to the other; finally she nods and leads away her choice.

Sometime later she returns. The same words are spoken as she approaches the group. When asked about the lamb which she has just taken, the witch replies, "Hier quand il jouait dans l' chemin, un wagon l'a écrasé."
("Yesterday when he was playing in the road, a wagon ran over him.")

The mother again gives in to the witch's tears, as she does in each case until only one lamb remains. The witch's story is different each time: "Un chien enragé l'a mordu," or "Il a monté dans un arbre et il a tombé," etc. ("A mad dog bit him." or "He fell from a tree."

Having given away the second to last one, the mother hides the last lamb. When the witch returns, the mother concedes to letting her search the "house" for the baby. The witch discovers it and takes it away.

On the following "day," she is back. When the mother inquires about the reason for this visit, the witch replies, "J' suis venu t'inviter pour souper avec moi." ("I came to invite you to sup with me.")

The mother asks, "Il y a des chiens chez toi?" ("Are there any dogs at your house?")

"Oui, mais ils sont pas mauvais." ("Yes, but they are not mean.")
The mother, reassured, goes to the witch's for supper. When they have finished eating, the hostess asks if the mother sheep would like to take a look at the garden. "Ça c'est (voici) les carottes, les navets, les choux," etc., and the witch names all the vegetables in the garden. While the mother is admiring the plants, the witch signals to her dogs (the children who played the part of lambs). They chase the mother back to her home.

"Les 'Tits Moutons Dorés"

To play "The Little Gilded Lambs," one child is selected to be the mother sheep; another, the wolf. The rest of the children hold hands and stand behind the mother.

The wolf gathers twigs and pretends to build a fire. The mother moves closer and teases the wolf by holding out her foot and saying, "J' vais défaire ton feu." ("I'll undo your fire.") The wolf answers, "J' vais prendre un 'tit mouton," and at the same time he snatches one of the lambs which are trying to escape.

The procedure is repeated until the wolf has stolen all the "tits moutons dorés." At the end, the mother, in despair because all her children are gone, throws herself off a "cliff." The lambs, seeing this and being unable to escape, cry out, "Baa, baa."

Notable likenesses to the French "Les 'Tits Moutons Dorés" are contained in a game entitled "Chickamy, Chickamy, Craney-Crow" found in the collection edited by John Herring-
The Illinois game is given below:

The game begins by choosing a "leader" and the "old witch." Then they form a circle, the "old witch" taking her place inside and pretending to be picking up sticks to make a fire. The children in the ring circle around and sing:

Chickery, Chickery, craney crow,
went to the well to wash his toes,
When he got back his chickens were gone.
What time is it, old witch?

The "old witch" answers any hour that suits her fancy, whereupon, the circling halts and the "leader" and the "old witch" hold the following dialogue:

Leader: What are you doing, "old witch"?
Old Witch: Picking up sticks.
Leader: What for?
Old Witch: To build a fire.
Leader: What do you want to do with a fire?
Old Witch: To cook a chicken.
Leader: Where are you going to get the chicken?
Old Witch: Out of your flock.

Thereupon the children run in every direction, the "old witch" trying to catch one and the "leader" trying to prevent it. When she succeeds in getting a "chicken," she takes it to the fire and asks, "How do you want to be cooked?" As soon as the answer is given, the "old witch" goes through the process of dressing and cooking the "chicken" according to the method named. The game grows more exciting and arduous as it goes on. It is necessary for the "old witch" to be one of the swiftest runners. Each "chicken" as it is caught ceases to be a part of the game.

"Cacher Fouet"

The leader hides a whip while the players hold their hands in front of their eyes. When he announces that

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5 Cox, op. cit., pp. 221-222.
he is ready, they begin the search for the whip. Each one must keep an eye on his neighbor, for the one who is successful in finding it is entitled to use it on all those near him who have not returned to the spot from which they started.

"Guette Loup"

A ball is thrown over the roof of a small building by a player who says, "Guette loup." ("Be on the lookout for the wolf.") The catcher, to signify that he is ready and waiting, replies, "Tire loup." ("Shoot the wolf.") He then prepares to throw the ball to the first player, repeating the same words.

This game is amusing to children who are learning to handle a ball.
CHAPTER III

TALES

There are two main types of tales in the oral literature of Louisiana: the Märchen or fairy tales and the animal stories. Students of folklore have traced the former to India and Europe; the latter to Africa. In addition to these traditions, there have been American Indian and Canadian influences. For these reasons, we find in the folk tales of many foreign lands and those of our sister states plots and characters which appear essentially parallel to ours.

Like the ballads, the tales brought over from the homeland served in many cases as the only literature available to people who settled in sparsely populated regions, especially those persons who could not read and write. As these stories were transmitted by word of mouth from generation to generation, they underwent many changes. Occasionally parts were forgotten and others substituted for these; generally the tales were modified to conform to the surroundings in which these people lived.

The stories in this collection are written in the Acadian dialect as they were related to the writer.

The Legend of Foolish John

The art of story-telling is disappearing from sections
in which legends and tales had so long been preserved. Formerly there was no more enjoyable pastime for the "veillées" and the rainy days which kept children indoors than that of recounting the innumerable nonsensical escapades of the imitable Jean Sotte. Hearing about this foolish one, who, despite the solicitude of a devoted mother, grew more stupid day by day, always meant a fresh delight for the youngsters.

From the studies made by Calvin Claudel we learn of the existence in the folk literature of many lands of a character who exhibits a close similarity to the Jean Sotte of Southwestern Louisiana.

Foolish John appears as Juan Bobo in Spanish-speaking countries. In Joseph H. Carrière's Tales from the French Folklore of Missouri he appears in the tale "Bon Mangeur" ("Good Eater"), p. 304, also in the story "John Bête pis John Sage" ("John the Stupid and John the Wise") and "Jacques Pataud" ("Jack Slewfoot"). He appears as "Jean Sotte" in Alcée Fortier's collection, Louisiana Folk-Tales. In F. H. Lee's Little Stories to Tell he appears in "Jack and his Mother;" in E. H. Busk's The Folk-Lore of Home, as "The Booby;" in F. H. Lee's Folk Tales of All Nations, as "Silly Matt;" in J. Jacobs' Celtic Fairy Tales, as "Jack and his Master;" in Dr. E. H. Campbell's Santal Folk-Tales, as "The Story of a Simpleton;" in Joel Chandler Harris' Evening Tales, done into English from the French of Frederic Ortoli, as "Loony John."1

Jean Sotte

Un' fois Jean Sotte coupait un' branche d'arbre. I'

1 Quoted from "The Legend of Foolish John" by Marie Theriot and Marie La Haye, Southern Folklore Quarterly, VII (1943), 153.
s'était mis au bout d'la branche.

Un homme passe, regarde Jean Sotte, et lui dit:
—Moi, jamais, tu vas tomber si tu restes au bout
da la branche. Mets-toi donc sur l'autre bord, près du corps
(tronc).

Jean Sotte l'écoute pas, et un moment après, quand
la branche casse, il tombe par terre. Il s'lève vite en
disant:
—Ben, c't homme doit être l' bon Dieu. J' connait
prédire les choses.

Et il part sur son mulet à trois pattes pour rencon-
trar l'homme.
—M'sieu, m'sieu, il crie. Tu dois être l' bon Dieu!
J'ai tombé tel que tu m'as dit. Dis-moi donc, s'il vous
plait, quand j' vas mourir.
—Quand ton mulet aura buté trois fois, tu vas tomber
mort, l'homme répond.
—Bien merci. Et Jean Sotte continue sur son ch'min.
Avant bien longtemps, il arrive à un fossé et l'
mulet fait un faux pas.
—Ah, dit Jean Sotte, il m'en reste que deux.
Arrivant à un deuxième fossé, l' mulet bute encore.
—Ben, ça m'en reste seulement un autre.
Il reprend la route. Un peu plus loin, il arrive à
un autre fossé, et l' mulet bronche encore.
—Oh, oh, Jean Sotte crie. Ça c'est la fin! C'est
la troisième fois, et j' suis mort.
En disant ça, il s' jette par terre et reste sans grouiller.

L' monde qui passaient dans l' chemin trouvent Jean Sotte étendu comme mort.

_Pauvre p'tit, ils disent. Il' a dû s' faire du mal sur la tête et ça l'a tué. Allons l' ramasser et l'emmener chez sa maman._

_L' part avec. Mais, au milieu du bois il' y avait trois ch'mins qui s' croisaient. Il' s' demandaient quel des ch'mins il' fallait prendre._

Jean Sotte, quand il a entendu ça, s' lève assis et les dit:

_Ben, quand j' étais vivant, moi, j' passais toujours ici, et il' les montre quel ch'min prendre._

_Les hommes étaient si fâché du tour bête à Jean Sotte qu'il' l'ont lâché, et il a tombé par terre si fort que ça l'a tué c' coup là._

One day Foolish John was cutting a branch from a tree. He was sitting on the end of the branch.

_A man going by saw Foolish John and said to him, "Of all things! You will fall with the branch. Get on the other side, near the trunk."_

_Foolish John paid no heed to the man' s words. It was not long before the branch broke off, and down went Foolish John. Getting up quickly he said, "Well, that man must be God. He knows the future."_
And off he went on his three-legged mule in pursuit of the man. "Mister, Mister," he cried. "You must be God! I fell just as you had warned me. Tell me, please, when I shall die."

"When your mule will have stumbled three times, you will fall dead," the man answered.

"Thank you very much." Foolish John continued on his way.

Before he had traveled very far, he arrived at a ditch. His mule stumbled.

"Ah," exclaimed Foolish John, "only two more left."

Crossing a second ditch, the mule again made a "faux pas." "Well, only one after this," lamented the stupid one.

He continued on his journey. A little farther was a third ditch, and of course the three-legged mule made another false step.

"Oh, oh!" cried John. "That's the end. It's the third time, and I'm dead."

Saying this, he flung himself off the mule and remained motionless.

Soon some people walking by saw Foolish John stretched out as if he were dead. "Poor little one," they said, "a terrible blow in the head must have killed him. Let's pick him up and carry him to his mother's house."

On they went with him. Soon, however, they came to a crossroad. They began debating which road to take.
Foolish John, hearing this, opened his eyes and said, "Well, when I was alive, I always used this road," and he indicated the correct one.

The men were so angry at Foolish John for having played such a silly stunt that they let him fall as hard as they could. This time he really died.

'Tit-Jean-Sans-Feur

The next legend, "Tit-Jean-Sans-Feur," is one which, according to the studies of it made by Miss Grace Partridge Smith, "belongs to a distinct type of folktale, one that has received little, if any, attention." She cites an Illinois version of the same story, pointing out that variants of it are to be found in Canada, Arkansas, Alabama, Florida, North Carolina, and Southern Missouri.

Father sent my little brother out after the cows. He didn't come back and he didn't come back. Finally, Father said, "Gimme a sheet, I'm going to scare the daylights out of that kid!" So Father got a sheet and threw it around his shoulders. Then he rushed out of the yard toward the pasture where the cows were supposed to be rounded up. He was followed closely by a pet monkey which had grabbed a towel and wrapped it around himself in imitation of his master. When Father reached the hillside, he covered up his head with the sheet, and, waving his arms, wandered up and down the path looking for his boy. The monkey did the same. Finally they heard the boy's voice crying out, "Run, Big 'Fraid, run; Little 'Fraid'll get you."
Miss Smith observes that "the prefatory incident of William, his father, and the monkey" can be traced to European sources, and she quotes six Old World variants of the same tale, the oldest of which is Welsh. This one, she states "evidently goes back to the 17th century," and "its preservation must be attributed to the local and ethnographic peculiarities of rural Wales, quite different in this respect from those prevailing in England."

Because of the existence of these versions, Miss Smith concludes "that the story has undergone a process of progressive decay" and "that it must have reached America in the form of a local legend." The St. Landry variant follows:

I' y avait un' fois un 'tit garçon qu'avait jamais eu peur d' rien. Sa maman et son papa aimaient pas voir ça, parce qu'i' craignaient toujours que quéqu'chose l'aurait arrivé. S'il était si brave, alors i' s'aurait jamais aperçu du danger.

I' e avaient beau lui raconter toutes sortes d'histoires qui faisaient dresser les cheveux sur la tête de presque n'importe qui. Mais tant qu'à 'Tit-Jean ça l' changeait pas. I' pouvait aller dans l' bois quand i' faisait noir comme en bas la terre et il avait pas peur. Le soir à n'impor te quelle heure s'il entendait du train dans l' poulailler,

\[4\text{Ibid., p. 90.}\]
\[5\text{Ibid., p. 91.}\]
\[6\text{Ibid., p. 93.}\]
i s'levait et allait voir pourquoi les poules criaient.

Sa maman et son papa essayaient toujours penser à un remède, ça les tracassaient tant.

—Il doit, quand-même, avoir un manière à l' faire peur, i s' disaient.

Quelques jours avant la Toussaint, un idée est v'nù aux parents.

—Ben, si i' n'a rien dans l' monde ici qui peut faire peur à Jean, i' y a bien l'autre monde, i' s' disent.

Alors, sans rien dire à son garçon, l'homme va au village et leue trois singes avec un homme qu'avait un p'tit cirque.

L'après-midi la maman dit à 'Tit Jean:

—Cher, i' n'a un' chose que t'as pas fait encore, et ça c'est aller dans l' cimetière quand les revenants étaient dehors. I' faudra qu' tu nous montre si tu peux aller à minuit ce soir et marcher parmi les tombes et les fosses.

Quand la nuit s'est fait, l'homme a couvert les singes avec la farine et les a amenés au cimetière. On dirait qu' c'était comme un fait exprès, qu'qu'un était v'nù fouiller une fosse l' même jour. L'homme pouvait, alors, mettre les singes dans l' trou. À minuit quand i' s'est aperçu que Jean v'nait, i' va s' cacher derrière une tombe pas trop loin d'où les singes étaient.

—'Tit-Jean, i' crie dans' un voix tremblante, 'Tit-Jean.

Et après un moment:
'Tit-Jean, viens ici!

Et l'homme a parti, quittant son garçon tout seul.

'Tit-Jean a commencé chercher partout pour trouver qui l'avait appelé. Il avance dans la direction du trou et regarde dedans. Ça lui ressemblaient trois hommes avec les bras étendus.

I' comprenait qu'i' demandaient qu'i' les aide à sortir d' la fosse, ça fait i' les donne la main. À mesure qu'i' les sortait les singes l'entouraient et l' regardait. Chaque mouvement qu'i' faisait, i' faisaient tel.

_Vous autres c'est des esprits? i' les demande.
_Pas d' réponse.

_Ben, vous autres doit sûr en être, si vous autres parlez pas. J' pense vous autres est v'nu s'amuser un peu ce soir comme c'est la veille d' l' Toussaint. Et j' pense vous autres a pas l' droit causer avec l' monde. Comment ça serait si j' restait moi jouer avec vous autres? Quoi vous autres aime' jouer? Oh, mais, c'est vrai vous autres parlez pas.

'Tit-Jean prend à faire des p'tits courses dans l'allée du cimetière et les singes l' suivent, faisant tel qu' lui. Bientôt i' les fait tenir les mains et jouer des p'tits jeux qu'i' jouait avec ses amis à l'école.

Son papa était caché à la porte du cimetière. Quand il a vu ça, il a retourné ches lui en s' lamentant. Il a raconté à sa femme ça qu'avait arrivé.

Quand le jour était presque là, 'Tit-Jean arrive:
There was once a little boy who had never been afraid of anything. His mother and father were uneasy over this situation, because they were always thinking that something would happen to him. Being so brave, he would never recognize danger.

In vain they related all sorts of gruesome tales that made almost everybody’s hair stand on end. As for Tit-Jean, these things didn’t worry him in the least. He could go into the woods when it was pitch black, and he was never frightened. At any hour of the night when he heard noise in the chicken house, he got up to investigate why the chickens were restless.

His mother and father were always trying to think of a remedy for this boldness because it worried them so much.

"There must be a way to frighten him," they persisted.

A few days preceding All Saints’ Day, an idea came to the parents.

"Well, if there is nothing in this world to alarm him, there’s something in the next world," they said.
Without letting his son find out about it, the man went to town and rented three apes from a man who had a small circus.

In the afternoon the mother told her son, "Dear, there's one more thing left to test your bravery. That is to go into the cemetery on the eve of All Saints' when the spirits are out of the graves. You must show us if you can go there at twelve o'clock tonight and walk among the tombs and graves."

When night came, 'Tit-Jean's father powdered the apes with flour and took them to the cemetery. To his good fortune, a grave had been dug the same day. He could, then, place the apes in the hole. At twelve o'clock, when he heard 'Tit-Jean approaching the cemetery, he hid behind a tomb not far from the apes.

"'Tit-Jean," he cried in a trembling voice, being careful to disguise it. "'Tit-Jean."

After a moment he called out again: "'Tit-Jean! Come here!" And off he went, leaving the boy alone.

'Tit-Jean began to search everywhere to find who had called him. He advanced in the direction of the hole and looked inside. What he saw seemed to him three men with arms outstretched.

Understanding that they wanted him to assist them in leaving the grave, he gave them a hand. As he helped them out, they stood around him and looked at him closely. They imitated every movement that he made.
"Are you spirits?" he asked them.

When he received no answer, he continued, "Well, you must be if you don't talk. I guess you came out tonight to have a little fun since it's the eve of All Saints'. And I imagine you don't have the right to chat with people. How would it be if I stayed here to play with you? What do you like to play? Oh, but, I had already forgotten. You can't talk anymore."

'Tit-Jean began to romp down the paths in the cemetery, the three following him. Later he showed them how to hold hands to play the games he had learned at school along with his friends.

In the meantime, his father was hidden near the cemetery gate. When he saw what was going on, he went home in disappointment, lamenting over his fate of having such a boy. He told his wife what had occurred.

Just before daybreak, 'Tit-Jean arrived. "Mamie," he said, "I had a fine time with the spirits! They are even better playmates than real people. They don't quarrel."

His mother and father lost all hope of ever teaching him the meaning of fear. His name remained 'Tit-Jean-Sans-Peur.

'Tit-Louis, Fin-Voleur

The character Fin-Voleur is a part of the French folklore of Missouri also, as proved by the inclusion of a
story entitled "Fin Voleur ou Les Pantoufles d'Or" in the collection of J. M. Carrière. Upon comparison, the Missouri tale and the St. Landry version which follows do not indicate too wide a divergence in that Fin-Voleur is striving for the hand of the girl he loves and in order to attain this end he is forced to commit theft under very difficult (though somewhat different) circumstances. In each case he proves victorious, winning the princess in the end.

We note the absence, however, of the supernatural element in Carrière's story. In the tests to which the master thief is put there is no mention of "oxen with horns of solid gold," nor "the music box that played upon being touched." There is no devil living upon earth and rearing a family. These details were as perfectly reasonable and acceptable to the primitive mind as they are to the very young child of today who lives in an imaginary world.

"Tit-Louis, Fin-Voleur, s'était amoureux de la fille du roi. Parce qu'il trouvait 'Tit-Louis un peu trop basse classe, l' roi voulait pas donner les consentements au mariage. Cependant, 'Tit-Louis était déterminé d'avoir la fille. Il s' vante de ses canailleries, disant qu'il"

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8 The word "canailleries" is used in the Acadian dialect in the sense of "espiègleries" ("clever tricks") instead of in the Standard French sense of "trfonneries" ("low tricks").
pourrait voler même au diable. Quand l' dit ça, la chose tombe du goût du roi, parce qu'il avait longtemps eu envie des choses que c' vieux diable qui restait pas trop loin avait.

— Ben, j' te promets t' donner ma fille si tu peux m' voler c' que c' vieux diable a.

Le complot est fait, et quand la nuit vient, 'Tit-Louis s'approche chez l' diable. L' s' cache derrière un arbre jusqu'à l' voit qu' personne est autour. L' grimpe dan' l' arbre et monte su' la branche qui donne su' un' fenêtre du grenier.

Il entre et cherche partout. Avant longtemps il découvre dan' un coin trois ou quatre sacs d' or et d' argent. L' les vole et retourne chez lui.

— Ben, dit l' roi, c'est bon, mais l' vieux diable a quel' chose encore que j' veux. S' est un' paire d' boeufs qu'a des cornes en or solide. Et avec ça, j' veux la charrette qui va avec.

Fin—Voleur perd pas d' temps. L' va dans l' écurie du diable, s' cache, et quand il a vu qu' tout l' monde dormait, attelle les boeufs et part avec eux.

L' roi était pas encore prêt à donner sa fille.

— 'Tit-Louis, j' suis pas encore satisfait; va encore, et apporte-moi la belle musique que l' diable a caché dans sa maison.

Fin—Voleur a bien compris qu' c' était ça l' affaire qu' était plus dur, parce que la musique jouait d' elle même
quand on la touchait; mais, pourtant, son goût pour la fille
du roi était toujours pareil. Il savait bien qu'le roi
aurait pas changé son idée, et, vu qu'il avait réussi jusqu'
à là, la meilleure chose était de prendre les risques et
continuer.

Il retourne, rentre encore dans la maison, mais la
fois ça, c'était du tracas! Il fallait faire attention d'
pas faire de train pour réveiller le diable et sa famille.
A force chercher, Fin-Voleur découvre la musique cachée
dans la salle à manger.

Mais, enfin! En la touchant, la musique commence à
jouer, et Fin-Voleur part pou' s' sauver; mais les choses
qu'étaient dans son ch'min tombent avec tant d' train (bruit)
que le diable s' réveille et prend 'Tit-Louis.

_Eh, coquin, l' dit, grinchant (grincant) ses dents.
Tu vas regretter que t'as essayé ça ici, parce que j' vas t' tuer.

Fin-Voleur, toujours pré' à répondre, dit au diable:
__Mais, tu peux pas m' tuer à c't' heure. 'Carde
comme j' suis maigre. L' faudra m' engraisser un peu.
__C'est bien vrai, approuve le diable et l' met
Fin-Voleur en cage.

Fin-Voleur voulait manger seulement des poules rôties
et du riz.

Après quèqu' temps le diable trouve Fin-Voleur assez
gras et l' dit à sa femme:
__Prépare l' dîner et moi j' vas inviter nos amis.
La vieille djablesse envoie sa p'tite fille couper du bois pour mettre l'eau au feu. Mais la p'tite fille pouvait pas l' couper parc' qu'elle était trop faible.
Fin-Voleur voit sa chance.
—Chère, i' dit d' sa cage, si tu veux, moi j' peux couper ton bois.
La p'tite pense un peu et répond:
—Mais i' faudrait t' laisser sortir d' t' cage.
—Tu pourras m' remettre après.
—Alors, j' vas demander à Mame.
La djablesse était en arrière après enfiler ses cou-
teaux. Elle disait cette prière:
ou-saine-sou; chi-gui-sha-gaow, ou-saine-sou.
—Mame, j' peux pas couper l' bois, mais l'homme m'a dit si j' l' laisse sortir d' la cage i' va l' faire pou' moi.
—Ah, ben, laisse-lé faire. Il est trop gras quand-
La p'tite djablesse ouvre la cage. Fin-Voleur ra-
masse la hache, fait semblant de frapper la bûche, mais au lieu d' ça, i' donne un coup à la p'tite derrière la tête.
I' s'avance près d' l' place où la vieille djablesse est, s' cache, approche sans faire du train, et lui donne un pareil coup.
I' monte en haut, vole la musique, descend, met l' feu à la maison, et s' sauve.
'Tit-Louis, Sly-Thief, became enamoured of the king's daughter. Because he thought that 'Tit-Louis was of too low a class, the king would not consent to the marriage. Still, 'Tit-Louis was determined to have the girl. He boasted of his ability to play clever tricks, saying that he could steal from the devil himself. When he said that, it was much to the king's liking, for he had long desired some of the possessions of the devil who lived not far away.

"Well, I promise to give you my daughter if you can steal what this devil has." And the scheme was completed.

When night came, 'Tit-Louis approached the devil's home and concealed himself behind a tree. When he saw that no one was around, he climbed onto the branch of a tree that was close to an attic window.

He entered and looked everywhere. Soon he discovered in one corner three or four bags of gold and silver. 'Tit-Louis stole them and returned to the king's.

"Well," said the king, "that is good, but this old devil has something else that I want—his oxen with horns of solid gold. And with that, the cart to which he hitches them."

Without losing any time, Sly-Thief went into the devil's barn, hid, and when he saw that all the family was still asleep, he hitched the oxen and departed for the king's
The king was not yet ready to give up his daughter. "Tit-Louis, I am not yet satisfied; go there again, and bring back to me the fine music box that is hidden in the devil's house."

Sly-Thief understood very clearly that this was the hardest task of all, because this music box played automatically upon being touched; but, still, his taste for the king's daughter had not changed. He knew very well that the king would not go back on his word, and since he had been so successful thus far, the best thing to do was to take the risk and continue.

He returned, re-entered the devil's home, but this time, it was difficult! He had to be careful not to make any noise that might awaken the devil and his family. After a lengthy search, he discovered the music box hidden in the dining room.

But, alas, upon his touching it, the box began to play, and Sly-Thief attempted to escape, but the chairs which were in the way fell on the floor, causing so much noise that the devil arrived and captured 'Tit-Louis.

"Ah, rascal," he said, gritting his teeth, "you shall regret that you tried that here, because I am going to kill you."

Sly-Thief, always quick to reply, cunningly thought of an answer. "But you can't kill me right away. See how skinny I am. You'll have to fatten me a little."
"That's true," approved the devil, and he placed Tit-Louis in a cage.

"Tit-Louis would eat only roasted chickens and rice. After a while, the devil, thinking that his prisoner was fat enough, told his wife, "Prepare the dinner, and I'll go invite our friends to eat with us."

The devil's wife sent her little daughter to chop wood to build a fire for boiling the water. But the little girl tried in vain to heave the ax; she was too weak.

Sly-Thief, perceiving this, saw his chance. "Chère," he spoke from his cage, "I can chop the wood for you."

The little girl thought for a while, then replied, "But it would be necessary to let you leave the cage."

"You can put me back in later."

"Then I'll go ask Mamma."

The little girl's mother was behind the kitchen, sharpening her knives, and meanwhile reciting this incantation: "Chi-gui-sha-gaow, ou-saine-sou; chi-gui-sha-gaow, ou-saine-sou; chi-gui-sha-gaow, ou-saine-sou."

"Mame, I can't cut the wood, but the man said that if I let him out, he'll do it for me."

"Oh, let him do it. He's too fat to run away, anyhow. Take the keys off my belt."

The little one opened the cage. Sly-Thief picked up the ax, pretended to let it fall upon the log, but, instead, gave the child a blow with it behind the head.
Creeping slowly to the spot where the mother was, he gave her a similar stroke.

Up the stairs he went to the new hiding-place of the music box, seized it, and, before departing, set fire to the devil's home.

This time, the king gave 'Tit-Louis his daughter in marriage.

The Animal Stories

In particular favor with Louisiana French-speaking children are the animal stories. The wealth of this type of lore, Calvin Claudel tells us, "is doubtless a contribution of the Negro's memory of jungle life and possibly some is the contribution of American Indians." He adds, also, that we are indebted to French realism for "the wit and cunning of these characters as they are developed." 9

Bouqui et Lapin

Among the animals that are given the power to act and speak like human beings, the best loved are "Bouqui" and "Lapin." Bouqui is the stupid goat that gets the worst of any bargain. Always he must be outwitted by Lapin, who, despite his disadvantage of weakness, manages to triumph through cleverness.

Bouqui et Lapin restaient ensemble. Un jour, après qu'il avait neuvillé, Bouqui dit à Lapin:

— C'est temps pou' planter les patates. Allons nous lever demain à bonne heure et prendre une bonne avance, Compère.

Lendemain matin i' sont partis avant-jour. Compère Bouqui s'est mis à l'ouvrage pou' même, mais Lapin faisait juste semblant travailler.

Tout d'un coup, i' pense à un excuse.

— Oh, Compère Bouqui, i' dit. Ecoute, i' sont après m'appeler pou' un baptême catin. I' faudra qu' j' vas être parrain. Et i' part.

Un demi-heure plus tard Lapin arrive.

— Comment l' nom à la catin? demande Compère Bouqui.

— Trois quarts, répond Lapin.

Bouqui trouvait qu' c'était un' drôle de manière pou' appeler un p'tit, mais il a rien dit.

Tout' la journée c'était la même chose.

— Ecoute, Compère Bouqui. I' m'appellent pou' un autre baptême.

Et pauvre Bouqui pouvait rien dire. Chaque fois que Lapin rev'nait l' nom d' l' catin était:

— Demi.

— Un quart.

— Gratte-au-fond.

L' soir Bouqui retourne chez lui. Dans l' bas du garde-manger i' trouve vide l' gallon qu'il avait laissé
Bouqui and Lapin lived together. One day after a rain, Bouqui told Lapin, "It's time to plant our potatoes. Let's get up early tomorrow morning and get a good start."

On the next morning they left at daybreak. Compère Bouqui began working in earnest, but Lapin only made a pretense of it.

All of a sudden he thought of an excuse. "Oh, Compère Bouqui," he said. "Listen, someone is calling me to assist at a doll christening. They want me to be godfather." And off he went.

A half-hour later, Lapin returned. "What did they name the baby?" asked Bouqui.

"Three-fourths," answered Lapin.

Now Bouqui thought that was a rather peculiar name for a baby, but he did not say anything.

All day long the same thing happened. "Listen, Compère Bouqui. They are calling me to another baptism."

Poor Bouqui could say nothing. Each time upon Lapin's return, the name of the doll was, in succession:

"One-half."
"Last quart."
"All gone."

That night when Bouqui returned home, upon going to his pantry, he found empty the gallon jar which he had left
full of honey that morning. That had been Compère Lapin's christening!

Rouget et Alison

Un' fois i' y avait un' grande manche pas beaucoup loin d'ici. Dans la manche un gros bœuf nommé Rouget était l' roi. Avec ses grandes cornes pointues i' guettait la manche et laissait pas aucuns autres bœufs étrangers passer.

Un jour pendant qu' Rouget avait été manger un peu d'herbe dans la savane à un voisin, un jeune p'tit bœuf noir entre dans la manche. Les vaches, qu' avaient peur de la colère à Rouget, avancent côté Alison et lui dit:

— Mais, non, venes pas ici, 'Tit Nomme; c'est ici la manche à M'sieu Rouget. I' va être fâché que vous est v'nu ici et i' va vous battre comme i' fait avec tous les bœufs qu'essayent entrer dans sa manche.


Et Alison commence manger de l'herbe, comme-ci rien en était.

Comme de fait, tout d'un coup on entend un gros "Bau........n" de la direction d' la savane. Les vaches et les veaux tremblent parc' qu'i' connaît que l' sang va couler
si Rouget arrive et trouve Alison toujours dans la manche.

La poussière se lève quand Rouget s’aperçoit du p'tit bœuf noir, et l' vient à pleine course, les yeux rouges, les narines dans l'air, et l' ventre à terre. Il s'arrête droit là et crie au jeune bœuf:

__'Tite espèce, quoi c'est tu fais dans ma manche?

Sort ici ou j' vas t' massacrer.

Alison est pas un capon et ça l' tracasse pas beaucoup. Il connaît qu' Rouget vient vieux et puis est plus aussi bon batailleur que d'habitude. Alors, il greuille pas.

__Vi-laine fi-gure! crie Rouget dans sa grosse voix.

__Et toi, et toi! répond Alison dans sa 'tite voix perçante.

__'Tit effronté, dit Rouget au plus jeune, tu vas m' l' payer.

Il avance avec ses cornes. Mais au lieu d' reculer, Alison l'attend toujours et bien vite un' bonne bataille commence:

Les vaches et les veaux s' sauvent parc' qu'i's ont jamais vu quèqu'un avec assez d'audace pour battre Rouget. Dans leurs coeurs, cependant, i's auraient voulu voir Rouget attraper un' bonne bûchée.

A force que la poussière monte on peut plus voir les deux enragés. Un bout après, on voit l' pauvre vieux Rouget couché par terre, après saigner d'un' corne cassée. Il s' plaint quand i' regarde ses amis et dit:
C'est pas la corne qui m'fait pleurer, mais c'est la honte que j'ai été éplumé par un p'tit qu'a pas encore du poil dans les oreilles.

Et les vaches et les veaux fait semblant que ça les fait d'la peine, mais dans leurs coeurs i' disent:


Pauvre vieux Rouget a plus jamais eu envie d'essayer empêcher entrer tout l'monde qui voulait passer en travers la manche.

There was once a long lane not very far from here. In this lane a huge reddish-colored ox named Rouget was the king. With his long, pointed horns he kept strict watch on the lane and did not permit a passage to any strange oxen.

One day while Rouget was eating grass in a neighbor's pasture, a young black ox entered the lane. The cows, who feared Rouget's anger, approached Alison and said, "But no, don't come here, little man; this lane belongs to Mr. Rouget. He will not like your coming, and he will give you a thrashing just as he does to all the strange oxen that try to enter this lane."

Alison, the little impudent one, laughed at the warnings of the cows and said, "But, Mesdames les Vaches, I am not afraid of ten of Rouget's caliber. Let him come forward. He has never drunk blood!" And he began to eat grass.
as if nothing were out of the ordinary.

As was to be expected, all of a sudden they heard a loud and deep "Bau....m" from the direction of the pasture. The cows and the calves trembled because they knew that there would be bloodshed if Rouget arrived to find Alison still in the lane.

Dust began to fly when Rouget became aware of the little black stranger, and he came running at full speed, his eyes bloodshot and his nostrils in the air. He stopped, then cried to the youngster: "Insignificant little creature, what are you doing in my lane? Get out, or I will slaughter you."

Now Alison was not a coward and that did not worry him at all. He knew that Rouget was becoming old and was not as good a fighter as he used to be. Therefore, he did not stir.

"Ug-ly face," cried Rouget in his bass voice.
"And you, and you!" retorted Alison in his little screeching voice.
"Shameless creature," Rouget flung to the younger, "you shall pay for this."

He came forward with his horns. But instead of recoiling, Alison maintained his ground and soon a fine battle started!

The cows and calves hastily escaped, for they had never seen anyone with enough rashness to undertake to fight
with Rouget. In their hearts, however, they wanted to see Rouget receive a good pounding.

So much dust arose around the fighters that soon they could not be seen. It was not long, however, before his friends could distinguish Rouget on the ground, bleeding from a broken horn. Lamenting when he saw them, he cried out, "It isn't the horn that causes me to cry; it's the disgrace of having been overcome by one so many years my junior."

The cows and calves feigned sorrow, but in their hearts they said, "Well, Rouget has received what was coming to him. He thought he was 'too much of a man.' Perhaps another time he will know better."

Poor Rouget did not try even once more to prevent any strange animals from passing through his lane.

L'Ours et L' Chat-Tigre

L'ours et l' chat-tigre restaient ensemble dans l' bois. Un jour l' chat-tigre demande à son ami:

"Compère Ours, tu connais ça qu'on appelle un homme?"

"Mais oui, répond l'ours, j' connais bien. C'est un chasseur."

"Ben, tu devrais bien m'en montrer un."

L'Ours lui promet.

"J' vas t'en montrer un, mais j' t' parie quand j' vas l' voir j' vas m' sauver."
I' commencent à marcher dans l' bois. Tout d'un coup ils ont rencontré un p'tit garçon qui portait un p'tit fusil. Le chat-tigre touche son ami et lui demande tout doucement:

_—C'est ça?
_—Non, ça c'est seulement un demi-homme.

Avant longtemps l'ourse voit un chasseur venir au loin.

_Regarde, Compère chat-tigre, c'est ça on appelle un homme.


L' chasseur sort son sabre qu'était pendu après sa ceinture et donne un coup au chat-tigre qui part à s'échapper. A pleine course il arrive côté l'ourse qu'était toujours caché en bas des 'tits bois.

_Eh, ben, dit l'ourse, t' as vu ça qu'on appelle un homme à c' t' heure?
_—Oui. Compère, mais c'est un drôle de chose ça, quand même. J' m'a soufflé du pimon et du poivre dans les yeux et ça m'a aveuglé un bout et m'a jeté par terre. Après ça, l'homme s'a arraché un' côte, et avec ça, j' m'a chat-touillé dans l' côté.

The bear and the wildcat lived together in the
weeds. One day, the wildcat said to his companion, "Brother Bear, do you know something which is called a man?"

"Yes," answered the bear, "I know him very well. He is a hunter."

"Well. I wish that you would point one out to me."

The bear promised. "I'll show you one, but I bet, as soon as I spot him, I'll start running."

They began to walk in the woods. Suddenly a little boy carrying a rifle came past them. The wildcat nudged his friend and asked softly, "Is that it?"

"No, that's only a half-man."

Before long the bear spied a hunter coming in the distance. "See, that is what we call a man." And away he went at top speed.

The wildcat advanced brazenly, and the hunter, upon perceiving him, took quick aim and shot. The wildcat tumbled and rolled over three or four times.

Taking his sabre from his belt, the man stabbed the animal in the side. The wildcat rose quickly and escaped in the direction of his friend the bear.

"Well," said the latter, "you have seen a man now."

"Yes, Brother, but I think he is a very funny thing. He blew red pepper and black pepper into my eyes, which blinded me and caused me to fall on the ground. After that, he extracted one of his ribs, and this he used to tickle me in my side."
The "tites contes" or "tites farces" which follow are representative of the large repertoire of humorous anec-
dotes which the older people recall from childhood.

Si l' Bon Dieu Veut

Il y avait un' fois un' bonne vieille femme qui, en faisant ses projets du plus p'tit au plus gros, ajoutait toujours cette invocation: "Si l' bon Dieu veut."

Alors, c'était toujours: "Demain, j' vas aller au village peu' faire mes achats, si l' bon Dieu veut" ou "Demain, j' vas repasser l' linge, si l' bon Dieu veut."

Son mari vient fatigué un jour et lui crie:

"Jamais, c'est toujours la même chose! C'est pas l' bon Dieu qu'a cet ouvrage à faire. C'est toi. Tu sais bien qu'Il le veut!

C'était la veille de Noël.

Dans l'après-midi l' même homme causait avec deux voisins. En parlant d'un' chose et l'autre, i' dit:

"Moi, j'aimerais bien m' rendre compte d' cette affaire de boeufs qui parlent à minuit la veille de Noël. J' crois j' vas aller écouter ce soir.

Alors, quand i' retourne chez lui, i' soupe et s' couche un moment pour sommeiller. À dix heures i' va dans l'écurie où ses deux boeufs étaient couchés. Vers minuit il entend un' voix qui dit:
Demain quoi on a à faire?
Et un autre voix répond:
__Porter notre maître en terre.
L'homme a pas attendu pou' entendre plus qu' ça.
Il a parti à pleins course, criant à sa dame:
_Femme, femme, ouvre-moi la porte; ouvre-moi la porte, si l' bon Dieu veut!

There was once a good old woman who in making plans, from the most unimportant to the most significant, always added this invocation, "If God is willing." Consequently it was always: "Tomorrow I shall go to town to buy some provisions, if God is willing," or "Tomorrow I shall iron my clothes, if God is willing."

Growing tired of this, her husband cried out to her one day, "It's always the same repetition! Don't you know that it is not God who has this work to do. You have it. You know very well that He desires it." This occurred on Christmas Eve.

In the afternoon the man was chatting with his neighbors. Speaking of one thing and another, he mentioned the ancient belief that oxen had the power of speech at twelve o'clock on the night of Christmas Eve. "I would like very much to be reassured on this point," he said. "I think that tonight I will try to hear them."

He went home, ate an early supper, then took a nap. At ten o'clock the good man went into the stable where his
even were resting. About midnight he heard a voice saying, "What have we to do tomorrow?" And another voice replied, "Carry our master's body for burial." The man waited to hear no more. At full speed he ran toward his house, crying out, "Wife, wife, open the door; open the door, if God is willing!"

Jambes-Fines, Grande-Gueule, et Gros-Ventre

Un jour Jambes-Fines, Grande-Gueule, et Gros-Ventre ont été dans la forêt ramasser des placemines farouches. Gros-Ventre a vu un gros arbre qui avait une abondance de ces fruits dans la tête. Il a (est) monté. À force il en a mangé il a tombé et a fendu son gros ventre. Grande-Gueule, quand il a vu ça, à force il a rit, il a fendu sa grande gueule. Et Jambes-Fines, à force il a eu peur, a pris à s' sauver, mais il a buté sur (contre) un fourmi et a cassé ses jambes fines.

One day Slender-Legs, Wide-Mouth, and Big-Stomach went into the woods to pick wild persimmons. Big-Stomach, seeing a tree in the top of which was an abundance of this fruit, climbed into it. He ate so much that he fell, ripping his big stomach. Wide-Mouth, when he saw this, laughed so much he split his wide mouth. And Slender-Legs was so frightened upon seeing this he started to run away, but he stumbled on an ant and broke his slender legs.
Presque Pris!

Un jour l' maître avertit à son nègre Philo qu' l' temps des Paques raccourissait, et qu' i' devait aller à confesse. L'homme l' prévient de bien s' préparer afin d' faire un' confession valide.

Le lendemain, le nègre s' lève avant-jour et s' dirige vers l' église pour trouver l' prêtre.

La confession commencée, l' prêtre voit la nécessité d'interroger Philo. I' lui demande:

__As-tu volé des poules?
__Non, non, non, père, répond l' nègre.

En arrivant à la maison, Philo va trouver son maître qui lui dit:

__Ben, t'as confessé, Philo. J' pense que l' prêtre a eu peu' t' demander des questions?
__Oui, maître, li mandé mon zen. Puis, li manqué prendre mon! Li mandé mon si mo t'es volé des poules. Mo dit li non. Ben chance li pas mandé si mo t'es volé des chapens! Lá mo t'es pris!

One day the master warned his Negro, Philo, that Easertide was coming to a close and it was necessary that he make his Easter duties. The man cautioned Philo to make a thorough examination in order that his confession might be valid.

On the next day, Philo arose early and went to church
to find the priest. Confession begun, the priest saw the necessity of interrogating the Negro:

"Did you steal hens?"

"No, no, Father," answered the Negro.

Upon arriving at the house, Philo went in search of his master, who said, "Well, Philo, you've been a good boy today. I hope the priest did not have to ask questions to help you with your confession."

"Yes, Master, he did, and I almost got caught there! He asked me if I had stolen hens. I said 'No.' Good thing he didn't ask me if I had stolen some capons!"

Première Visite au Village

Un' p'tite fille de cinq ans va au village pour la première fois. En revenant chez elle, on lui dit:

_Ben, t'as vu l' village, à c't' heure!

_Mais non, j'ai pas vu; n'avait trop de bâtisses.

A little country girl of five went to visit a town for the first time. When she returned home, she was told, "Well, now you've seen the town!"

"But, no, I didn't see it; there were too many buildings."
CHAPTER IV
SONGS

The songs in this collection are divided into three groups and subdivided according to types. Those of Negro origin are written as sung in the patois; those which appear to have been composed by the Acadians are in their dialect; those which seem to be of French origin are in the Standard French of Louisiana as they are sung.

I am not aware of the presence of any one of these in any printed collection of Louisiana songs. They can be dated in the 90's or 80's of the last century or earlier, for they were sung to me by persons in their late sixties and seventies who had learned them as children.

Songs in Negro Patois

Songs to Amuse Children

Bouqui and Lapin

Tous les bêtes dans bois
Connait M'sieu Pascal;
Jusqu'à Bouqui,
Jusqu'à Lapin,
Connait M'sieu Pascal,
Connait M'sieu Pascal.

All the beasts in the wood
Know M'sieu Pascal the hunter;
Even Bouqui the goat,
Even Lapin the rabbit,
All know M'sieu Pascal,
All know M'sieu Pascal.
'Tit Nèg' Anglais

'Tit nèg' anglais.
T'as couché dehors;
'Lil' English talkin' nigger;
Done slept out-doors;

'Tit nèg' anglais.
T'as volé mon 'tit cochon;
Done stole my pig;

'Tit nèg' anglais.
T'as couché dehors;
Done slept out-doors;

'Tit nèg' anglais.
T'as rend' mon mon 'tit cochon. Gotta gimme back my pig.

Castaingo Who Promises Candy

_Castaingo, Castaingo,
Quoi tu vas donner à tes chiens?

_Des 'tits bonbons,
Des 'tits bonbons fêvis.

"Castaingo, Castaingo,
What you gonna throw your dogs?"

"Lil' candies,
Yeah, lil' seeded candies."

A Remedy for a Person Who Has Strangled

_Pierrot Croc,
_Babineau Congo,
_C' est mon oncle Charlot
_Qui m'a conyé dans l' dos.

_Jim, Jim Croc,
_Carmélite et Joe,
_M'a fait vomir

_Pierrot Croc,
_Babineau Congo,
_It's my Uncle Charly
_Who thumped me on the back.

_Jim, Jim Croc,
_Carmelite and Joe,
_Made me give up
Three hunks o' jerked beef.

The Gossip Caroline

Caroline ici,  
Caroline là-bas,  
Caroline tout partout,  
Toujours la même qui dit ça.

Caroline here,  
Caroline there,  
Always Caroline everywhere,  
Always the same to pack the tale.

Lullaby

First Version:

Fais dodo se' pitit,  
Fais dodo se' pitit,  
Qui li dodo,  
N' donner li gâteau;  
Qui li dodo,  
N' donner li gâteau.

Rock-a-bye, her lil' one,  
Rock-a-bye, her lil' one,  
To the one who takes a nap  
I'll give a lil' cake;  
To the one who takes a nap  
I'll give a lil' cake.

Second Version:

Fais dodo, pitit à Joe,  
Fais dodo, pitit à Joe,  
Quand la réveiller,  
Ma donner li gâteau;  
Quand la réveiller,  
Ma donner li gâteau.

Rock-a-bye, Joe's lil' one,  
Rock-a-bye Joe's lil' one,  
When he awakes,  
I'll give him cakes;  
When he awakes,  
I'll give him cakes.
Work Songs

The Song of the Washerwoman

Marie Déah,  Marie Déah,  Hanging out her clothes,
Li t'apé tend' se linge  Come a lil' birdie
Un 'tit rose  That pecks her
Qui l'a piqué  On the nose.
Su' l' nes.  Ow, ouch, ouch!
Aie, aie, aie!  How it hurts her!
Ça fait li mal;  Ow, ouch, ouch!
Aie, aie, aie!  How it hurts her!
Ça fait li mal.

The Slave Planting-Chant

Baquinl, Baquinl ici.  Baquinl, here, Baquinl,
Baquinl, Baquinl ici.  Baquinl, Baquinl ici,
Baquinl, Baquinl, plantez;  Baquinl, plant it, Baquinl.
Baquinl, Baquinl, plantez.  Baquinl, Baquinl, plant it.
Baquinl, Baquinl ici.  Baquinl, Baquinl, plant it here.

Love Songs

Aunt Catherine

O, oui, Fifine,  Oh, yes, Josephine,
Mais toi to trep belle pièce,  You are too pretty a piece,
C'est Tante Catherine  It's just that Aunt Catherine
Qui fait les embarras.
Si ça s’rait pas Catherine,
Nous s’rait déjà marier.
O, oui, Fifine,
Mais toi te trop belle pièce.
C’est Tante Catherine
Qui fait les embarras.
Who’s causing all the fuss.
But for her.
Already we’d be wed.
Oh, yes, Josephine.
You are too pretty a piece.
It’s just that Aunt Catherine
Who’s causing all the fuss.

A Marriage Proposal

Me gain ’tite maison
Qui tout tapissée;
O, Mama! C’est pour Clémence!
O, Clémence, si te l’aime moi,
M’a dit toi ça,
M’a marier toi!
Gotta lil’ house,
Walls papered fine;
O Mama! It’s for Clémence.
Ah, Clémence! If you love me,
Tell you a secret—
I’ll marry you!

Dance Songs

The Matadors

O, les matadors
Tiraient au blanc
Quand mon grand-père
Et ma grand’mère
Dansaient nu-pieds.
Oh, the matadors
Were shooting at the bull’s eye.
When my grandad
And my grandma
Were dancing barefoot.
Not All the Negroes Can Dance This!

C'est pas tous les Chaubes
Qui peut danser ça;
C'est pas tous les Chaubes
Qui peut danser ça;
C'est pas tous les nègu
Qui peut danser ça;
C'est pas tous les nègu
Qui peut danser ça!

It's not every nigger named Chaube
Who can dance this;
It's not every nigger named Chaube
Who can dance this;
It's not every good dancin' nigger
Who can dance this;
It's not every good dancin' nigger
Who can dance this!

Aséline

Un, deux, trois.
C'est Aséline ça ça y est!
Aséline ça ça y est!
Aséline ça ça y est!

One, two, three.
It's Aséline, that's who!
Aséline, that's who!
Aséline, that's who!

Un, deux, trois.
C'est Aséline ça ça y est!

One, two, three.
It's Aséline, that's who!

C'est 'Nile li olé.
Et c'est li la gain ya.

Wants Emile,
And him, she'll get!

O Roséline

'O, Roséline, mais qui t'olé manger?
Des boulettes au riz
Rice cakes.

"Oh, Roséline, what will you eat?"
"Rice cakes,
Rice cakes."
-0. Roséline, mais qui t'ôlé manger?
-Des 'tits cochons rôtis.
Des 'tits cochons rôtis.
-0. Roséline, mais qui t'ôlé manger?
Des tartes à la bouillie!
Des tartes à la bouillie!

"Oh, Roséline, what will you eat?"
"Lil' roasted pigs."
"Oh, Roséline, what will you eat?"
"Custard pie! Custard pie!"

**Songs in the Acadian Dialect**

**Mocking Songs**

**The Cars Have Killed Fido**

Tout c'qui m' fait d'l' peine
Les chars ont tué Fido;
Si c'est pas Fido,
C'en est un proche pareil.
Tout c'qui m' fait d'l' peine
Les chars ont tué Fido;
Si c'est pas Fido,
Ça pourrait être Minette.

What saddens me
Is that the cars have killed Fido;
If it's not Fido.
It could be one like him.
What saddens me
Is that the cars have killed Fido;
If it's not Fido.
It could be Minette.

**The Drunken Husband**

The wife speaks:
_Où vas-tu, pauvre ivrogne._
Sotl comme un cochen?
Ces jambes font que des gestes,
Ces jambes font que des gestes.
Tu m'as mis dans l'embarras.
Quatre enfants sur les bras.
Dis-moi qu'est-ce qui faut faire;
Dis-moi qu'est-ce qui faut faire.

The husband answers:
_Ah, ma chère femme,_
Je n'y pense plus.
Ah, ma chère femme,
Je n'y pense plus.
Prends-les, jette-les par terre;
Prends-les, jette-les par terre.

"Where to, poor sot,
Drunk as a pig?
Wobbly legs.
Wobbly legs.
Your troubles I stand
Four kids on my hands.
Tell me what to do;
Tell me what to do."

The Wife's Complaint

Quand j'étais demoiselle,
Je fréquentais les bals;
À présent je suis mariée,
Je reste à la maison.
Boire de la tisane!

When I was a girl in my prime,
At the balls I had a good time;
But now an old woman am I,
So at home must I stay,
To sip herb tea all day!
Dans ces beaux quartiers,
Dans ces beaux villages,
Il y a des jolies filles
Bonnes à marier.
Emméline en est une,
Il faut l'avant danser;
Bosco va la voir,
C'est pour la demander.

Non ami, Bosco,
Ce n'est pas la peine;
Emméline est belle,
Mais c'est pas pour toi.
Elle a ses amitiés sur Cotraille.
Pour les noces ils vont servir
Des crapauds en fricassée
Et des grenouilles rôties!

In these fine regions.
In these fine villages.
There are pretty girls.
Girls good to marry.
Emmelina is such a one.
She must always be the first to dance;
Bosco goes to see her
And to ask for her hand.
Bosco, my friend,
It's a waste of time.
Emmelina is lovely.
But she is not for you.
She has her mind on Cotraille.
For the wedding-feast, they will have,
Didn't you hear?
Stewed toads and roasted frogs!

Dance Songs

The Contredanse

_Ma maîtresse,
Quand je danse

"Mistress mine,
When I dance
La contredanse
With my little cousin
Mistress mine,
When I dance
The contredanse,
My little petticoat
Does it swish?
"It swishes like this,
It swishes like that,
It swishes just like
The tail of a cat."

The Quadrille of the Monkeys

Pie, tabac,
Woodpecker, tobacco,
Trip over legs;
Spin and turn,
But don't fall on your head.

Teasing the Dancer

'Tites jambes fines,
Little skinny-legs,
Little tight-pants,
Little monkey-face,
Will you dance?
Joie de Vivre

Les pommes et les oranges  Rosy apples, golden oranges.
Sont bien bons à manger;  All are good to eat;
Les filles et les garçons  Sweet girls, fine boys,
Sont bien bons à marier.  All are good to marry.

Love Songs

How a Lady

C'est aujourd'hui je porte le nom de dame,
Par l'anneau d'or que je porte sur mon doigt;
L'aimable des qualités des filles
C'est aujourd'hui je m'en vais la quitter.

Today I take the name of 'lady.'
By the golden band on my finger;
The sweet charms of a girl,
Today I shall put behind me.

Jay K. Ditchy in a chapter on history and folklore of the Acadians has recorded a song the essence of which is strikingly parallel to this one. He relates that, sung by the friends of the bride during a wedding reception, the words often brought tears streaming down her cheeks. As a rule, her emotion was transmitted to the guests. We may conclude that the St. Landry parish song is evidently a vestige of this one:
Adieu, fleur de jeunesse!
Il faut enfin t'abandonner
La noble qualité de fille
Ne faut aujourd'hui la quitter.

J'ai promis dans mon jeune âge
De ne jamais me marier.
Aujourd'hui je trouve l'avantage;
Mes parents l'ont conseillé.

Quand j' vois ces filles à table
Assis's devant moi en ces lieux,
Quand j' les vois et les regarde,
Les larmes me tombent des yeux.

La ceinture que je porte
Et l'anneau d'or que j'ai au doigt
C'est mon amant qui me les donne
Pour finir ses jours avec moi.

Il est vrai, ma mignonne,
Il est vrai j' vous les ai donnés
C'est pour passer votre jeunesse
Avec moi z-en tranquillité.¹

Cruel Lover

Cruel amant.
Que veux-tu que je fasse?
Tu m'as hâlas.
Plongé au désespoir;
Tu m'as hâlas.
Plongé au désespoir!

Cruel lover.
What will you have me do?
You have, alas.
Plunged me into despair;
You have, alas.
Plunged me into despair!

Linger a Moment

Une main dans la mienne,
Et l'autre sur mon cœur,
Dis maintenant, veux-tu partir encore?
Ta main me presse,
C'est ce cœur qui t'adore;
Reste un instant encore,
Et tu pourras partir.

One hand in mine,
The other on my heart,
Tell me, will you leave me?
Your hand presses
This adoring heart;
Linger a moment
Ere you depart.

Tu le veux, à demain;
Jure de ton amour
De revenir fidèle à ton amant;
Ta main me presse,
C'est ce cœur qui t'adore;
Reste un instant encore,
Et tu pourras partir.

You must go? Until tomorrow, then.
Vow on your love
To be faithful and return;
Your hand presses
My adoring heart;
Linger but a moment
Ere you depart.
The Despairing Lover

En passant devant chez toi,  On going past your house,
J'ai appris ma triste mort;  I was condemned to death;
On me dit que tu te maries;  I heard you were marrying
Ton amour est ma folie.  another;

On me dit que tu te maries;  They say you are marrying
J'mourirai du désespoir;  another;
J'mourirai du désespoir.  I know I shall die of despair;
I know I shall die of despair.

Songs in Standard Louisiana French

Children's Songs

Happy Birthday, Father!

Bonjour, papa.  Happy birthday, Papa,
C'est aujourd'hui ta fête.  Today is your feast day.
On me l'a dit;  They told me so;
Je viens te la souhaiter.  I've come to wish you the best.
Voici des fleurs.  Here are flowers
Pour couronner ta tête;  To crown your brow.
Dans chaque fleur  In each one
Tu trouveras mon cœur.  You'll find my heart.
Ride a Cock-Horse

André Badeaux.
Sur Mazurka.
La vieille Témise.
Est derrière lui.
Galop, galop.
Galop, galop;
Galop, galop.
Galop, galop.

Old widow Témise
Sets her cap for him.
Gallop, gallop.
Gallop, gallop;
Gallop, gallop.
Gallop, gallop.

Teaching the Dance

Quatre pas en avant.
Quatre pas en arrière.
La pirouette à la dame.
Salut au bout.

Four steps forward,
Four steps behind,
Pirouette before your lady,
Bow at the finish.

The Cry of the Candy Vender

J'ai de la vanille
Pour les jeunes filles,
Du limon
Pour les jeunes garçons;
Un sou le bâton,
A la fa-ri-don-don,
A la fa-ri-don-din,
Un sou le bâton.

Here is vanilla-flavored candy
For my young misses,
And lemon for the gentlemen;
A penny, a penny a stick.
A la fa-ri-don-don,
A la fa-ri-don-din,
A penny, a penny a stick.
The Vegetable and Fruit Vender

Ma tante Michel, My Aunt Michel, she has
Des choux, des raves Cabbages, turnips,
Du raisin deux Sugar-grapes,
Des figues, bananes. Figs, bananas.

A la bonne aventure au gai! Coming by chance to the mirthful.
A la bonne aventure au gai! Coming by chance to the mirthful.

You Will Plant Those Cabbages!

Ah, ah, Bouqui, Bouquin. Ah, Bouqui, Bouquin,
Tu planteras ces choux! You'll get those cabbages
Bouqui ne veut pas planter planted!
ces choux;
Bouqui ne veut pas Bouqui does not want to plant
rester debout. the cabbages;

Ah, ah, Bouqui, Bouquin. The cabbages do not want to
Tu planteras ces choux! stand alone.

Ah, ah, Bouqui, Bouquin, You will have to plant those
You will have to plant those cabbages!
cabbages!

Child's Prayer

Cette nuit, Last night
J'ai rêvé I dreamed
Que j'étais au paradis. I was in Heaven.
C'est un songe, Just a dream,
| Un vrai mensonge; | A real make-believe; |
| 'Tit Jésus. | Little Jesus. |
| Bon soir. | Good-night. |
| Mes délices et mes amours. | My joy and my love. |

A dream of love!   

**Love Songs**

**A Dream of Love**

| Eva, la fière. | Eve, proud one. |
| A tout pour plaire; | Has everything to please; |
| Nombreuses beautés. | Numerous charms, |
| Et felle gaité. | Playful gaiety, |
| Son beau chant | Beauty of song, |
| Si doux, si tendre. | So sweet and tender. |
| Qu'on voudrait toujours l'entendre, | One could hear her forever-- |
| Un rêve d'amour. | A dream of love! |
| Un rêve d'amour. | A dream of love! |

**A Modest Maid**

| Un jour j' rencontre Estelle | One day I met Estelle. |
| Qui portait un bouquet. | Who was wearing a bouquet. |
| J'ai dit, "Petite mamselle, | I said, "Little maid, |
| Pour moi vous l'avez fait." | You intended it for me." |
Elle dit, "Je n'y pensais guère,
Mais puisque te voilà,
Attache ta boutonnière,
Ça serait bien plus galant."
Voilà, voilà en lui disant ça,
Elle rougit par ici et par là-bas.

"I hardly thought that," said she;
"But since you are here,
Pin it in your button hole,
It will look better there."
And then, upon saying that,
She blushed from head to foot.

The Father Who Acts As Chaperone

Par un beau dimanche au soir
La chandelle allumée
Sur le bord de la table;
Le père de la demoiselle
Se réveille,
D'un air effarouché,
Recommande à sa fille
D'aller se coucher.

"Bonsoir, Ma'mie,
Bonsoir, ma belle;
Je pars pour ce voyage.
Quand je reviendrai
Si ton père est mort,
Je t'épouserai.

Lovely Sunday evening courting,
'Neath the candle-light
From the table's edge;
The lady's father
Starts from sleep
And with accusing eye
Suggests to his daughter
That it's time to retire.

"Goodnight, sweetheart,"
Says her lover, "Goodnight, my beauty.
On a long trip I must go.
But if, when I return,
Your father is dead,
I will marry you."
Tender Memories from a Garden

Quand je fais le tour du jardin,
Tout me nuit,
Tout me fuit,
Je meurs de chagrin.
Jamais j'oublierai
Le nom de ce jeune homme,
Un si tendre objet
De mes tendres souvenirs,
Un si tendre objet
De mes tendres souvenirs.

When I stroll through the garden,
I feel that all is lost,
All has fled,
I die of chagrin.
For never shall I forget
The name of him
Who is the tender object
Of my fond memories,
The tender object
Of my fond memories.

The Indifferent Lover

_—Nicolas, demain ma fête,
Et je t'attends mon bien-aimé;
Les fleurs orneront ma tête,
Car je t'attends, mon bien-aimé._

"Nicholas, tomorrow is my birthday,
And I await you, my beloved;
Flowers shall adorn my brow,
For I await you, my beloved."

_—Attendez, attendez pas,
Ça m'est égal, Mamselle;
Si vous m'aimez, je vous aime pas.
Ah, laissez-moi
planter mes pieds!_

"Wait, or wait not,
It's all one to me, Mamselle;
Love me, you may,
But love you, I do not.
Ah, let me be about my business;"
Laissez-moi
Planter mes pois.

— Nicholas. je vais me pendre;
Viens me servir de bourreau.
Les fleurs orneront ma tête,
Une croix sur mon tombeau.

— Fendez-vous, pendez-vous pas,
Ça m'est égal, mamelle;
Si vous m'aimez, je vous aime pas.
Ah, laissez-moi
Planter mes pois,
Laissez-moi
Planter mes pois.

An Eternal Lowe

Oh, Berthe chérie,
Je t'ai courtisée;
Tu m'as ôté
Toute mon existence.
Tu as eu mon cœur,
De toute bonne foi;
Malgré tes fautes
Je t'aime toujours.

Let me get to planting my peas.

"Nicholas, I shall hang myself;
Come serve as my hangman.
Flowers will adorn my brow,
And a cross, my tomb."

"Hang, or hang not,
It's all one to me, Mamelle;
Love me you may,
But love you I will not.
Ah, let me be about my business;
Let me get to planting my peas."

Oh, Berthe, dear one,
I have courted you;
But you destroyed
My life, my whole life.
You had my heart
All in good faith;
Yet, despite your faults,
I love you still.
Fouilles, fouilles,
Fouilles ma fosse,
Fouilles ma fosse,
Du profond de la terre.
A ma tête, une pierre de marbre.
Sur ma poitrine, une tour-terelle.
À mes pieds, des os croisés.
Pour faire voir au monde
Que je suis mort de l'amour.

Dig, dig.
Dig my grave.
Dig deep my grave.
Deep in the ground.
At my head place a marble slab.
On my breast, a turtledove.
At my feet, a cross-bones.
To let the whole world know
I died for love.

Neurning Sad Fate

Pleurez, mes yeux,
Pleurez ce sort funeste;
J'ai tout perdu,
En perdant mon amant.

Weep, my eyes,
And mourn this dreadful fate;
All have I lost
In having lost my love.

Pleurez, mes yeux,
Pleurez ce sort funeste;
J'ai tout perdu,
En perdant mon amant.

Weep, my eyes,
And mourn this dreadful fate.
All have I lost
In having lost my love.

Un romarin
Pour bénir mon chagrin,
Tout à l'entour
Garni de jasmins.

A rosemary give to me
To console my forlorn heart.
A rosemary all jasmine-festooned
Do give to me.
The Spinster's Lament

Que je suis sans plaisir au monde,
C'est de me voir sans amant.
Nuit et jour ma mère me gendre,
Elle me menace du couvent.
Un jour je disais à ma mère,
Si elle n'aurait pas épousé mon père,
Elle n'aurait pas de belle bergère comme moi;
Elle n'aurait pas de belle bergère comme moi!

How joyless in this world
Am I without a love.
Night and day did Mother scold
And threaten me with convents.
Until one day I told her
Had she not married my father
Never would she have had
As fine a lass as I;
Never would she have had
As fine a lass as I.

Memories of Youth

Près du foyer,
Chacun à sa compagnie.
Moi, seule, j'attends
Le rêve, sans amour.
Déjà l'hiver
Blanchit la campagne,
Le souvenir
De nos heureux moments.

Near the hearthstone,
Each has his love
But I alone wait
And dream alone.
Already winter
Shrouds the land
And the souvenirs
Of our happier hours.
My Love Will Accompany Me to My Grave

Trois jours après ma mort,
Tu viendras sur ma tombe,
Tu regarderas sur ma croix,
L'amitié que j'avais pour toi.  
After my death count three days
Then you will come to my tomb.
There to read upon my cross
The love I had for you.

Miscellaneous Songs

A Drinking Song

Mes amis, quand je suis gris.
Je suis jeune;
La bouteille est mon trésor.

Refrain:
Plus je bois, plus je bois.
Plus ce vin m'altère;
Car rien ne peut têrir chez moi
La soif et le plaisir.

Des richesses,
Je m'en fiche
Car je n'ai pas soif de l'or.

My friends, when I am tipsy.
I am a gay young fellow;
The bottle is my treasure.
The more I drink, the more I drink.
The more this wine makes me drink;
For nothing can diminish in me
Thirst for wine and pleasure.

Riches, ha!
I laugh at them.
For I have no thirst for gold.

A Ballad: On Breaux's Bridge

Au pont de Breaux, grand bal est annoncé.
Au pont de Breaux, grand bal est annoncé.
Hélène demande sa mère pour aller.
Hélène demande sa mère pour aller.

—Oh, non, ma fille, au bal nous n'irons pas.
Oh, non, ma fille, au bal nous n'irons pas.
—Comment, ma mère? Au bal nous irons, allez!
Comment, ma mère? Au bal nous irons, allez!
—J'ai fait un rêve que votre frère était noyé.
J'ai fait un rêve que votre frère était noyé.
—Voilà mon frère, qu'arrive mais à présent,
Veilà mon frère, qu'arrive mais à présent.
Bonjour, mon frère, au bal nous irons pas.
Bonjour, mon frère, au bal nous irons pas.
—Comment, ma sœur? Au bal nous irons, allez!
Comment, ma sœur? Au bal nous irons, allez!
Va mettre ta robe de soie noir tout brodée en or.
Va mettre ta robe de soleil noir toute brodée en or.
Voilà Hélène qu'est partie, mais au bal.
Voilà Hélène qu'est partie, mais au bal.
Elle arrive; elle se met à danser.
Elle arrive; elle se met à danser.
Voilà le pont qui défense avec Hélène.
Voilà le pont qui défense avec Hélène.

Comment, mon frère? Tu m'é quitteras noyer?
Comment, mon frère? Tu m' quitteras noyer?
Oh, mon, ma soeur, je suis à m'é dépouiller.
Oh, mon, ma soeur, je suis à m'é dépouiller.
Voilà des cloches qui se mettent à sonner.
Voilà des cloches qui se mettent à sonner.
La mère demande pourquoi sonnaient ces cloches.
La mère demande pourquoi sonnaient ces cloches.
C'est votre fille qui s'est laissé noyer.
C'est votre fille qui s'est laissé noyer.
Voilà le sort des enfants imprudents.

On Breaux's Bridge a grand ball is held.
On Breaux's Bridge a grand ball is held.
Helen aske her mother if she may go.
Helen aske her mother if she may go.
"Oh, no, Daughter, to the ball we shall not go.
Oh, no, Daughter, to the ball we shall not go."
"What, Mother! To the ball we will go! Come now!
What, Mother! To the ball we will go! Come now!"
"I dreamed a dream that your brother had drowned.
I dreamed a dream that your brother had drowned."
"But there is my brother just coming in now.
But there is my brother just coming in now.
Good-day, Brother; to the ball we shall not go.
Good-day, Brother; to the ball we shall not go."
"What, Sister! To the ball we will go! Come now!
What, Sister! To the ball we will go! Come now!
Go put on your dress of black silk embroidered in gold.
Go put on your dress of black silk embroidered in gold."
There goes Helen—off to the ball.
There goes Helen—off to the ball.
She arrives and starts to dance.
She arrives and starts to dance.
When lo! the bridge crumbles with Helen upon it.
When lo! the bridge crumbles with Helen upon it.
"What, Brother! You are going to let me drown?
What, Brother! You are going to let me drown?"
"Oh, no, Sister, I but free myself of clothing.
Oh, no, Sister, I but free myself of clothing."
But suddenly bells begin tolling.
But suddenly bells begin tolling.
The mother asks for whom they toll.
The mother asks for whom they toll.
"They toll for your own daughter who let herself
drown.
They tell for your own daughter who let herself drown."
(Moral) For such is always the fate of imprudent children!

Miss Andrée Fourcade of Sorbonne University, Paris, France, upon hearing this ballad, contributed a well-known French song entitled "Sur le Pont de Nantes." Since the words of both ballads have a general likeness and the melodies are identical, we may conclude that the Louisiana version is an imitation of the French.

Sur le Pont de Nantes

Sur le pont de Nantes un bal est annoncé.
Ma mère, ma mère, je voudrais y aller.
Ma mère, ma mère, je voudrais y aller.
Non, non, ma fille, tu n'iras pas danser.
Mente dans sa chambre et se met à pleurer.
Son frère arrive dans un carrosse doré.
Voyons, ma sœur, qu'as-tu donc à pleurer?
Ma mère ne veut pas que j'aille au bal danser.
Mets ta robe blanche et ta ceinture dorée.
A la fin de la danse le pont s'est écroulé Jeannette et son frère sont noyés.
CHAPTER V
PICTURESQUE SPEECH AND FORMER BELIEFS

Picturesque Speech

The following consists of common sayings, proverbs, dictums, and figures of speech peculiar to the Acadian dialect of the section of which I am writing. The expressions included were selected because of their individuality. Those few which appear to have been adapted from the French are listed as such; those still found intact have been omitted in this collection.

Wherever it has been possible, a literal translation is given first, the significance of the sentence or phrase given next.

Se préparer sur la glace

To be "on ice"
To dress painstakingly and impeccably

Tout neuf, tout beau

(Adaptation of French: "tout nouveau, tout beau")
New, therefore, beautiful
An innovation is usually welcomed. A stranger coming into a small town is well-received and lionized. This remark is a hint that soon his faults and foibles will be perceived and there will be a change in the atmosphere.

Faire bonbance éternelle

Unending feasting
To enjoy oneself with no thought of the morrow
Vive la joie, que la cabane en brûle!

Joy will reign, though the house burn down.
Devotees of "eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we may die"
An orgy of merry-making with no regard for consequences

Il ne faut pas dire: Fontaine, je ne boirai pas de ton eau.

Don't say, "Fountain, I will never drink of your water."
This is the same as advising a person never to say what he will not do, for fear of having to "eat his words."

Celui qui a pas bon tête aura bonnes jambes.

He who hasn't a good head shall have good legs.
The legs must pay for what the head forgets.

Il m'a chanté querelle.

He did his utmost to pick a quarrel with me.

Il a vidé un peu d'eau dans son vin.

He poured a little water into his wine.
He had lost his temper, but, upon meeting his match, soon calmed down.

Un feu de paille

A straw fire
A fit of anger which quickly subsides

C'était mettre l'allumette à l'huile!

(This is an adaptation of the French saying: "Jeter l'huile sur le feu.")
It was like applying a match to the kerosene.
It was all that was needed to make him explode!
This expression describes the effect of a remark or encouragement addressed to an already angry person.

Il avait besoin d'un romarin pour bénir son chagrin.

He needed a rosemary to bless his sorrow.
He had to go to a friend to receive sympathy in his worry over a matter of no significance. (The rosemary is the emblem of fidelity and constancy.)
Essayer de mettre des pailles dans les yeux

(The French expression is: "Jeter la poudre aux yeux.")
To place straw before people's eyes
To endeavor to deceive people

Raler la peau sur la bouillie

To cover the custard with the thick cream which forms on boiled milk or custard
To attempt deceit

Avoir la poche pleine de menteries

To have a pocketful of lies
To be well-prepared to answer the questions of inquisitive people or to have a lie to fit every situation

Chercher jusqu'au bord du monde

To search to the end of the world
To look high and low to find a lost object

Il est diable sur son quart.

He is a devil standing for his quarter-right.
He is a vexatious one.

C'est un tonnerre!

He is a thunder.
He is a tough one. This describes a troublesome, boisterous child.

Etre haut sur son quart

To be high on his quarter-right
To be "high and mighty" or to play the part of a grand being

Faire le chien couchant

To play the defenseless dog
To display meekness when, after a noble attempt at blustering, one is taken down a peg or two.

Il veut se faire valoir.

He wants to make people believe that he is really a "somebody."
Il amarre pas ses chiens avec des saucissons.

He does not bind his dogs with sausages. His talk is all vapor. He is more conservative than he would have us believe.

Il fait pas d'éclairs.

His appearance and his actions do not create lightning. He isn't very imposing in appearance nor in manner.

Vaut mieux une pièce mal mise qu'un trou bien fait.

It is much better to have a "badly put on" patch than to have a very well-made hole. Do the best you can. No matter how bad that is, it will still be an improvement over existing conditions.

Il en a fait des cheoux et des raves.

He made "cabbages and turnips" out of it. He wore it out completely.

On 'tait rien tout neuf, dans une boîte vide

The intruder's query, "What have you there?" brings this response: "A little new nothing in an empty box." In other words, "None of your business."

J'ai fait ça d'une manière de perdre l'espion.

I did that in such a way that the attention of curious people was not called to it or was diverted from it.

En effet! La mort n'a plus de fin!

In fact! Death has no end! After this occurrence, nothing will ever surprise anyone, no matter how strange it may be.

Ça me fend!

It melts me! The irony or the incongruity of the situation overcomes me.

C'est aussi sûr que la semaine a trois jeudis.

It is as certain as the week has three Thursdays. An emphatic way of denying the truth of a rumor
C'est une pratique à chagrin.

It is a sorry practice.
That is just so much trouble for nothing. It is bound to end in disappointment.

Quel est ce qu'il y a sur le tapis aujourd'hui?

(Qu'est-ce qu'il y a?)

What's on the rug today?
What's the news today?

Une affaire d'état!

A state function!
An ordeal or a "to-do" over a trifling matter

C'est pas plus qu'un sac à quoi.

It is nothing more than a bag to fill up with nothing.
It is simply a big "hurrah" over a matter of no consequence.

Il a du sang coagulé dans ses veines.

His blood has coagulated in his veins.
He is insensible to family love, friendship, etc.
He has no "feeling" whatsoever.

Elle a des yeux noirs comme des socos.

Her eyes are as black as muscadines.

Il marche comme un vieux canard-dinde.

He waddles like an old Muscovy duck.

Elle est fraîche comme un lapin.

She is as lively as a rabbit.

Elle se tord comme un liane.

She twists about like a vine.
She is restless, fidgety.

Il me suit comme un 'tit chien d'maison.

He follows me around like a little house poodle.

Il est gros comme un p'tit cochon au parc.

He is as fat as a little pig in a pen.
G’est tendre comme une rosée.
It is as fresh and tender as the dew.

Heureux comme des poissons dans l’eau!
As happy as fish in water!
A happily married couple!

Il a mangé comme un Turc.
He ate like a Turk.
He ate with a good appetite.

Il est maigre comme du tasseau.

("Tasseau" is meat which is cut in thin strips and dried in the sun in the extreme heat of mid-day. It is the equivalent of "jerked beef.")
He is as lean as jerked beef.

Dévorer comme un carencro
To eat fast and hungrily; to imitate a buzzard

Rejeter comme un carencro
To suffer nausea to the point of violent vomiting

Il est vif comme un taon.
He is as swift as a wood-boring insect.

Des jambes de titisse
Extremely small legs—the size of a sparrow’s "titisse" is dialect for "moineau," correct French form.

Des jambes de baguette
Wand-like legs

C’était comme danser parmi les verres de bouteilles!
I was so uncomfortable that I seemed to be dancing amid pieces of broken glass.

J’ai dansé tel qu’la souris sur les braises.
I danced like the mouse on red hot coals.
It gave me some bad moments!
Il est taquineur comme un 'tit chien de poche.

He is as annoying as a tiny "pocket-size" dog that is always barking and trying to assert itself.

Aller comme un papier de musique

It is as regulated as a sheet on which music is written.
It "goes like clockwork." The two are very congenial. They get along handsomely.

Un rataplan!

The beating of a drum!
A long-winded, monotonous speech

Se sauver comme le diable de l’eau bénite

To run away like the devil fleeing from holy water
To make a fast getaway

Cette pluie est comme la danse de la vieille femme.

This rain is like the old woman’s dance, slow and easy.
It is an all-day drizzle.

Long comme après-demain!

Long as day after tomorrow!
A ridiculous length

Gross comme un allumette

Thin as a matchstick

Il est un vrai pic-bois.

He is like a wood-pecker.
He continually harps on the same subject.

Marcher en macreuse

To walk like a coot
To walk sway-back

Avoir une corne cassée

To have a fractured horn
To be crying or complaining over a trifling ailment
Un cœur noir

A black heart
A person who is guilty of malicious acts

Un cœur de pierre

A stone heart
One who never sheds a tear, no matter what happens

La queue entre les pattes

The tail between the paws, like a meek dog
To be frightened, or to feel insecure

Un estomac de moqueur

A mocking-bird breast
Frilly neckwear or white jabot

C'est une peau de chien pour lui!

It's a dog's hide to him!
He despises that object or practice.

Une grande gabarre!

What a barge!
A large, uncomfortable home

Tu racontes ça tel comme un sotlard.

You relate this just like a drunkard.
You start way back, then beat around the bush before getting to the end or point of story.

Sortir la pierre du gigier (gésier)

To tell everything you know; to reveal even the color of the stone in the gizzard

Une tête d'hirondelle!

A swallow-head!
Used in a teasing vein, it denotes a person of extraordinary comprehension.

Une tête de sarcelle!

A blue-winged teal's head!
A scatterbrain or a person of little understanding
Un brise-fer!

A person who breaks anything he lays a hand on, even iron, into pieces.

C'est un coin de fer!

He is an iron wedge.
He can endure anything.

Ça c'est être poulet!

That's being "chickenish!"
He can't stand even the slightest exertion; he has no resistance against illness.

Pauvre bête! Il a la pépie.

Poor thing! He has pip (a sickness which affects chicks).
The hypochondriac, discovering a new ailment, is jestingly said to suffer from this.

Il a des oreilles de taisaut.

He is flap-eared like a hound. The word "taisaut" was adapted from the French "taisaut," "tally-ho."

Il a les oreilles à pique.

His ears are pointed like a pike.
He is eager to hear.

Il fait son homme, lui.

He is "talking big."

Faire des coups de queue

Swish one's tail
To feign wealth or power

Bête comme un zozie (zie)

Foolish as a goose
"Zozie" is used for "zie" in the negro patois.

Sa crête est encore rouge.

His comb is still red.
This describes an elderly person who does not appear to have aged.

\footnote{Nead, op. cit., p. 73}
Un couteau à deux taillons (tailles)

A double-bladed knife!
A hypocrite!

Passer le baquet à quelqu'un

To pass the bucket to someone
To leave someone "holding the bag"

Macaque trouve son pitit joli.

Even a monkey thinks her child is pretty.
Any mother is proud of her child and finds beauty in him.

Lui donner un pied

To give him a foot
To let a person go too far or to give him unfair advantage

Tousser comme un bois creux

To cough like a hollow log
To have a hollow cough

Elle ressemble à une vieille mère poule qui défend ses poulets.

She looks like an old mother hen that is defending her chickens.
Her protective attitude toward, or her concern for, these children is exaggerated. They aren't hers.

Tourner tel qu'une poule qui veut faire un nique (nid)

To twist and turn like a hen that wants to prepare a nest, but doesn't know where to start
To display uncertainty of movement

Elle a étendu ses bras tel qu'une poule couveuse.

She stretched out her arms like a setting hen.
She took up a great deal of space.

Il faut tel qu'une vieille poule qu'aime pas un poulet et l' bequete jusqu'à elle l' tue.

He imitates an old hen which, not liking a certain chicken, pecks him until she causes him to die.
He nurses a grudge against this person and does his best to harm him whenever he has a chance.
Ferme donc ton grabeau.

Close your cotton boll.
Stop talking; your words have no weight; they are only nonsense.

Quel pot de fleur!

What a flower pot!
What an ugly person! He is some ornament!

Vilain comme un diable avant-jour!

Ugly as a devil which one would see before daylight!

Vilain comme sept péchés mortels!

Ugly as seven mortal sins!

Il est briqué.

His face is as hard and ruddy as a brick.

Il veut s'arracher les cheveux maintenant.

He wants to tear out all his hair now.
He is very sorry that he has done this.

Il est pris dans les rangs courts.

He is caught where the rows are short.
He doesn't know where to turn.

Il peut pas entrer dans la ron sans bâton.

He can't come into the ring without a stick.
He must be prepared or must fulfill the requirements.
He has no right to talk.

Il est entre deux feux: ça brûle et ça chauffe.

To be between two fires: one burns, the other heats.
This is equivalent in meaning to the English saying: 'Between the devil and the deep blue sea.'

Etre en-bas l'écor or Aller en bas l'écor

To be under the hill
To be going down the hill
To be in bad health or losing one's grip on life

Avoir une mine de chien
To have the appearance of a dog
To be haggard after an illness

Tu devrais prendre des médicines. "Tu es jaune comme un citron.

You ought to take medicine. Your complexion is yellow as a lemon.

Il a mis ses pioches déhors.

When one who is miserly with his laughter finally breaks out into a broad grin, he is sometimes said to have "disclosed his pickaxes," meaning "his teeth."

Une couronne blanche

A white crown
A candy blond head

Ah, mais tu as la babine à Ma'n Sally aujourd'hui.

Ma'n Sally was an old negress who owned a small orange grove, and who, consequently, had some trouble with young vandals on her property, as many walked by on their way to school. She possessed a protruding lower lip, the condition of which became more and more exaggerated as she scolded the children or pouted because of their actions. Thus, "You're a grouch like Ma'n Sally today."

Il a planté chêne.

He planted an oak.
He fell headlong.

Il m'a pas donné gros comme une tête d'épingle.

He didn't give me a pin head.
He was too niggardly to give me even a little trinket.

Il donnera pas Caillette et son veau.

He won't give Caillette and her calf. (The black and white spotted cow is always Caillette.)
He will not contribute much; he is not that generous.

C'est jamais le bon chien qui attrape l'os.

It is never the right dog that gets the bone.
It is never the most deserving one who is rewarded.
C’est comme ça ça va.

That’s how it goes.
That is life.

Ça va à p’tits pas.

Asked how he feels, a person will often say, “I’m taking short steps.” In other words, “Making slow progress.”

C’est lui qui a gobé la pilule.

He swallowed the pill.
He got the worst of the bargain.

Restez avec un doigt dans la bouche

To be left with one finger in his mouth
To receive insults and show no effort to defend oneself

La roue tourne.

The wheel turns.
Everyone will meet ups and downs in life.

Son tour va venir.

His turn will come.
Sooner or later he will reap what he sowed.

Chaque chien a son jour.

Everyone will have his share of happiness and misfortune, or his turn to “get even” with his neighbor.

Le bon Dieu dort pas.

God does not sleep on his job.
God will set things to rights.

Nettre ses jeux au clair

To uncover his tricks

C’était prêter pour rendre.

It was lending to get paid back.
Now the two are even. He has received the same ill treatment which he gave the other.
Jouer l' pied d' dachon

To play "the pig's foot"
To play a trick on someone

Ramener

To sweep a chimney
To scold or berate a person; to "sweep his chimney clean"

Saccager

To pillage
To scold or berate a person

J' lui ai donné un "va-te-laver."

I gave him a washout.
I "let him have it"; I told him what I thought of it.

J'ai coupé son sifflet sec.

I cut his "windpipe."
I outwitted him.

Pas prendre l'air à quelqu'un

To ignore one completely

Ça c'était lui poser les mouches!

That was putting the patches in the right places.
That is what I call "giving him the works." That hit his sore spot.

C'est ça qu'en appelle scier tes cornes!

That's what we call sawing off your horns.
He took your breath away with a proper answer to your impudent remark.

Donner un casse-gueule

To break a jaw
To give a beating

Il lui a donné un capot.

He gave her a coat.
He jilted her.
Il faut pas la regarder croche.

Don't look at her cross-eyed.
Be very careful how you approach her and how you act around her. Any crossing of her will may bring down her wrath.

Il n'a pas moyen la prendre avec des pinces.

People are afraid to touch her, even with pincers. There is no way to approach her.

Marche pas sur son pied!

Don't walk on her feet!
Don't stir her to anger!

Arracher les yeux et la tête du monde

To extort the eyes and the heads of the people To sell at a very high price

C'est trop de sucre pour cinq sous!

That's too much sugar for a nickel! That can't be possible. It's too good to be true.

Des fleurs de calabasse!

Flowers from a calabash plant! That isn't much, in my opinion!

C'est du sucré en bouteille?

Bottled sugar! Fancy stuff, eh?

On voit le brouillé dans l'œil du prochain, mais on voit pas l'abeille (ou la bête) dans son propre œil.

We quickly perceive the tiny speck of foreign matter in our neighbor's eye, but we don't see the bee (or the log) in our own eye. We are quick to magnify our neighbor's faults, yet fail to recognize our own, however great.

Il a pas sa langue dans la poche.

He does not keep his tongue in his pocket. He talks a great deal; he speaks his mind.
Il faut pas lui donner le bon Dieu sans confession.

Don't absolve him entirely before you know both sides of the story.

Il respecte que son baptême.

The only thing he has any respect for is his baptism.

Sa bouche est pas un livre de prières.

His mouth is not a prayer book.

He is far from being exemplar in his speech.

Sa parole est pas un mot d'évangile.

Do not believe that his words are always "gospel truths."

Il jure comme un soldat.

He curses like a soldier.

Il est pas un tas à la fois!

He isn't much at one time!

He is not a marvel.

Quand l'honneur a passé, il était derrière la porte.

When people were being endowed with virtues, and "honor" went by, he was behind the door.

He certainly has no false pride, or none of any kind, for that matter.

Pouiller sa fosse avec ses dents

To be a glutton: to dig one's grave with his teeth

Un estomac en élastique

The heavy eater has a rubber stomach.

Elle veut manger que du pigeon rôti!

She wants to eat only roast pigeon.

She has a delicate or finicky appetite.

La misère fait le macaque manger le piment.

Misery makes a monkey eat pepper.

Necessity knows no law. Poverty brings ingenuity.
La violette se redouble.

Trouble and worry are accumulating. This is a reference to an old "danse-ronde" entitled "La Violette Se Redouble."

Il a pris ça pour l'argent comptant.

He accepted that as a cash payment.
He was gullible enough to believe that story!

Un p'tit blanc bec:

A young smart Alec—who has yet no sign of beard, therefore has no right to talk so. He enters into adult conversation, addresses elders without showing the proper respect, etc.

Rester au diable bouilli

To live "in the sticks"—miles from nowhere

Se faire une main avec quelqu'un

To use the proper approach and thereby create a desirable impression upon a person who is in a position to help you

Porter quelqu'un sur les doigts

To carry a person upon the tips of one's fingers
To wait on a person with hand and foot

Une main lave l'autre, et les deux lavent la figure.

One hand washes the other, and together they wash the face. One person helps another in need of assistance and together they accomplish with facility what one could not do alone.

Ils sent bras sur, bras sous.

(This is an adaptation of the French "bras dessus, bras dessous.")
They are arm-in-arm. They are intimate friends.

Ils sent en bras-corps.

(This is an adaptation of the French "à bras-le-corps," meaning, "in one's arms," "round the waist.")
They are very congenial friends.
Avoir un tour (de folie) de quelqu'un

To have a crush on someone
To be "crazy" over a person

C'est la faim et la soif.

That is the meeting of hunger and thirst.
These two are well matched. One is as evil as the other.

Les montagnes se rejoignent pas, mais le monde se rejoignent.

Mountains do not meet, but people do.
Despite all obstacles, and though it seemed impossi­ble, they met again.

Il voudrait mourir aux pieds de la grandeur.

He would like to die at the feet of grandeur.
He worships riches. He would do anything to receive a little attention from an influential person.

Il aime (en veut) haler sur la grosse corde.

He likes (or wants) to pull on the big rope.
He enjoys "putting on airs" or being extravagant in order to impress the world.

C'était midi quarante pour moi!

It was twelve-forty for me!
It was exactly what I wanted. There was no better time!

J'étais dans mon assiette!

I was in my dish!
Things were just as I wished them. I was delighted!

On envoie pas son chien à la chasse à coups de bâton.

One does not use a stick on a dog to induce him to go hunting.
You are using the wrong approach, the incorrect procedure.

Lui donner un bec

(This is an adaptation of the French "tour de bec," "kiss." "Bec" means "beak" or "bill.")
Thus, to kiss
Bowler la queue sur l' dos
To roll one's tail on one's back, ready to go
To be always ready to ream

Calcinor dans la maison
To "dry up" in the house
To be confined for a long time in the house, or to
go out seldom

Si tu fais ça pour moi, j' vais te dire qui est mon parrain.
This is an interesting way to prevail upon a small
child to do something about which he does not ap-
pear very eager. "If you do this for me, I'll tell
you who my godfather is." When he completes the
task, you reply. "Why, it's you!"

Si tu fais ça pour moi, j' vais danser à tes noces!
In a joyous mood one says to a friend, "If you do
this for me, I'll dance at your wedding!"

Parler pour entendre sa tête résonner
To speak just to hear the reverberation in one's
head
To make empty or foolish talk, simply to have some-
thing to say
To give voice to ideas or plans which will never be
fulfilled

Faire des caisses
Gossip

Connaître rouler les pilules
To know how to roll pills
To know how to prescribe medicine--spoken in a
joking manner

Ça lui fait beau jeu.
That's a fine game for him.
That suits him to a "T"

Avoir le dos large
To have a wide back
To be able to take all the blame because of absence
and lack of opportunity to defend oneself
Il avait ça fil en aiguille.

He had that like a threaded needle.
He was able to unravel the story without hesitation, supplying all details.

L'œil du maître engraisse l'animal,

The master's eye fattens the animal.
The animal benefits from the master's vigilance.
Leadership helps all around.

Un tour de lune

A craze

Avoir un bon grain (de folie)

To have a particle of folly

Avoir un bon tour

To be daft or idiotic

Il bat la berloque.

He is sounding the dismiss.
This elderly person is becoming childish; he is "going out."

Il mange le vieux gagné, lui.

He is living on what the others earned long ago.
He depends entirely upon the family for his support.

C'est tel qu'aller chercher le jour en charrette à bœufs.

To take a long time to accomplish a task. This is a reference to the ancient folk belief (Negro) that someone, leaving after midnight, was charged with bringing daylight in his oxen-drawn cart.

L'homme du midi

The twelve o'clock man
A sluggard or a drone

Il fera pas des (de) vieux jours.

He won't grow old on that job.
This work will not be to his liking for very long.
It requires more energy than he is willing to put forth.
Le chien qui va à la chasse perd sa place (près de l'assiette).
The dog that goes hunting at mealtime loses his place near the dish.
Leasing on your job might cause you to lose it. You incur punishment when you are neglectful.

C'est une praline!

What a lazy person! He must be stuck to his chair, like a fresh praline adhering to the dish.

Il a dû cassé son nerf, lui.
The indolent lounging is spoken of in derision as having fractured his nerve.

Il a jamais bu le sang, lui.
He has never drunk blood.
He is a braggart. Don't let his overweening boasts alarm you.

Il a tué son grand-père, lui!
That's killing his grandfather! That was some foolish thing to do!

C'est lui qu'a inventé l'eau douce!
He is responsible for the invention of sweetened water!
He has performed wonders, hasn't he? Who is he to be talking?
He has never accomplished anything worthwhile.

Ils vont pas jouer Bi-Bi La Flotte avec moi.
They won't make a doormat out of me. Bi-Bi La Flotte, the story goes, was a character who was easily influenced and whom everyone took unfair advantage of.

Il peut faire dix lassos (lassos) autour de son cou.
He can make ten lassos around that fellow's neck.
He can "twist" the other person around his little finger, mentally and physically.

Donner un bon temps à quelqu'un
To give someone a good time
To "stay with" a person; to be equal to him in argument, work, fight, etc.
C'est selon où la goutte va tomber.

It depends upon where the drop falls.
My decision is contingent upon many things. The story is that an old woman was preparing dough for a pie. A guest seated in the kitchen anxiously watched a bead of perspiration on the good woman's chin, uneasy with fear that it would fall into the dough. The hostess, persuading him to stay for dinner, received this for an answer.

La vache a envalé (avalé) la meule.

When a group of people are chatting and another person, thinking something extraordinary has occurred, excitedly inquires about it, he often receives this for an answer. The expression can be traced to a joke played upon an inquisitive, meddlesome old woman always asking, "What's happened?" If any minor accident occurred on the farm, she would gloatingly retort, "I told you so! I knew that would happen! It's your fault." Her grandchildren, growing tired of this, one day plotted to "faire une niche sur mére." One youngster ran up to his grandmother, crying agitatedly, "Mère, j'ai vu la vache a envalé la meule." "Grandmother, I've just come from the barn, and I saw that the cow has swallowed the grindstone." As was expected, the old lady made the same reply, "J'avais gai" and thus provoked much laughter from all the children who had concealed themselves nearby to enjoy the prank. We wonder if this broke her bad habit.

Il a apperté le poids du jour.

He carried the weight of day.
He struggled hard during his lifetime.

Tenir la queue du diable

To hold the devil's tail
To suffer poverty

Se faire finir

To wear out oneself with difficult and fatiguing work

Faire de ses pieds et de ses mains

To use hands and feet to achieve any desired goal
Attraper le tisonnier par le bout le plus chaud

To grasp the poker or fire-iron by the end which has been in the fire
To achieve an aim after a hard and long struggle

Se mettre en double et en quatre

To perform wonders in an effort to please

Sortir du sang d'une pierre

To extract blood from a stone
To perform the impossible

Tu peux parler comme ça. Tu fait pas l' tout d' mon jardin.

You can speak that way. You don't travel around my garden.
Saying and doing are two different things. You don't know my circumstances.

Dormir comme une bêche

To sleep like a log
To be in profound slumber

Jouer les paupières

To play around with the eyelids
To go to sleep

Appeler Alphonse

To call Alphonse
To snore loudly

Quand tu vas venir? Quand les poules auront des dents?

When are you coming to visit me? When the hens teeth?
You promise always, but you never show up.

Biscule Jeune, tu l'as pas vu passer dans sa charrette bleue?

Biscule, the Younger, didn't you see him drive by in his blue cart?
This was one of the most common ways of cautioning a child that his questions were untimely—his elders were conversing at that moment.

Embrasser un homme sans moustache est comme manger un œuf sans sel.
Kissing a clean-shaven man is like eating an egg without salt. How can you tell it's not a woman you are kissing?

A Bit of Wisdom

Si vous avez des affaires à faire, donnez pas vos affaires à faire à ceux qui ont des affaires à faire; ce mende qui ont des affaires à faire feront leurs affaires à faire et vos affaires à faire resteront à faire.

If you have things to be done, do not give these things to be done to those who have things to be done; those people who have things to be done will do their things to be done and yours will be left undone.

Some Former Beliefs

If a gift of a knife was made to a person, he had to present the giver with five cents in return. Otherwise, the knife would sever their friendship.

When a person gave seeds or plants of any kind to another, he was not to be thanked, for the plants would then not grow.

On the appearance of a new moon, a young boy or girl might dream of his future spouse if he looked up at the moon and repeated three times the following words:

Nouvelle lune, New moon,
Nouvelle éclairante, New giver of light,
J' souhaite que j' rêve I wish to dream
De mon destiné. Of the one destined for me.
If on the occasion of a wedding-feast, a girl ran a small piece of the bridal cake through the bride's ring and that night placed it under her pillow, she might dream of the man she would marry.

Dreaming of a wedding meant that shortly there would be news of a death.

To dream of money was an omen of death.

A cedar tree dying on one's property was a sign that soon someone in the family would decease.

If a person was buried on Sunday, a member of that family would die before a year had elapsed.

If the chickens cackled in large numbers and at the same time, usually in the early morning, a death would soon be announced.

Opening an umbrella in the house could mean that soon the mother in that home would die.

Cutting out a garment from white cloth on Saturday could cause evil to befall an infant or a young child in that family.

Throwing outside hair which fell while one was combing it was tempting misfortune.

Laughing much on Friday was a warning that one would cry on Sunday.
When one's ears made a buzzing sound, somebody was in the act of criticizing him.

If his nose itched, someone desired to kiss him.

An itching in the palm of the hand meant that he would receive some money.

If a lady's second toe happened to be longer than her first, she would dominate her household.

To stop a screech owl's song, one could "cut off her tongue" by turning over a pair of shoes, soles upward, or by sticking a knife into the door frame.

A rooster crowing in the early afternoon was heralding the arrival of company.

Dropping a dishcloth or a comb on the floor was likewise a sign of guests.

If sunlight and rain appeared at the same time, the devil was beating his wife and forcing his daughter to marry a toad.

Rain was not to be expected at night during the month of June.

If the wind happened to turn northerly while a person was mocking another's looks, he (the mimicker) would retain that appearance.
Turtle eggs hatched when thunder pealed.

"L' eau pannée," prepared by immersing red hot coals in water, was the panacea for all stomach ailments.
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VITA

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