



# TREEMONISHA



OPERA

in Three Acts



Words and Music

BY

# SCOTT JOPLIN.



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(Story Fictitious)

Act I—Morning.    Act II — Afternoon.    Act III—Evening.



## Preface.

The Scene of the Opera is laid on a plantation somewhere in the State of Arkansas, North-east of the Town of Texarkana and three or four miles from the Red River. The plantation being surrounded by a dense forest.

There were several negro families living on the plantation and other families back in the woods.

In order that the reader may better comprehend the story, I will give a few details regarding the Negroes of this plantation from the year 1866 to the year 1884.

The year 1866 finds them in dense ignorance, with no-one to guide them, as the white folks had moved away shortly after the Negroes were set free and had left the plantation in charge of a trustworthy negro servant named Ned.

All of the Negroes, but Ned and his wife Monisha, were superstitious, and believed in conjuring. Monisha, being a woman, was at times impressed by what the more expert conjurers would say.

Ned and Monisha had no children, and they had often prayed that their cabin home might one day be brightened by a child that would be a companion for Monisha when Ned

was away from home. They had dreams, too, of educating the child so that when it grew up it could teach the people around them to aspire to something better and higher than superstition and conjuring.

The prayers of Ned and Monisha were answered in a remarkable manner. One morning in the middle of September 1866, Monisha found a baby under a tree that grew in front of her cabin. It proved to be a light-brown-skinned girl about two days old. Monisha took the baby into the cabin, and Ned and she adopted it as their own.

They wanted the child, while growing up, to love them as it would have loved its real parents, so they decided to keep it in ignorance of the manner in which it came to them until old enough to understand. They realized, too, that if the neighbors knew the facts, they would some day tell the child, so, to deceive them, Ned hitched up his mules and, with Monisha and the child, drove over to a family of old friends who lived twenty miles away and whom they had not seen for three years. They told their friends that the child was just a week old.

Ned gave these people six bushels of corn and forty pounds of meat to allow Monisha and the child to stay with them for eight weeks, which Ned thought would benefit the health of Monisha. The friends willingly consented to have her stay with them for that length of time.

Ned went back alone to the plantation and told his old neighbors that Monisha, while visiting some old friends, had become mother of a girl baby.

The neighbors were, of course, greatly surprised, but were compelled to believe that

Ned's story was true.

At the end of the eight weeks Ned took Monisha and the child home and received the congratulations of his neighbors and friends and was delighted to find that his scheme had worked so well.

Monisha, at first, gave the child her own name; but, when the child was three years old, she was so fond of playing under the tree where she was found that Monisha gave her the name of Tree - Monisha.

When Treemonisha was seven years old Monisha arranged with a white family that she would do their washing and ironing and Ned would chop their wood if the lady of the house would give Treemonisha an education, the schoolhouse being too far away for the child to attend. The lady consented and as a result Treemonisha was the only educated person in the neighborhood, the other children being still in ignorance on account of their inability to travel so far to school.

Zodzetrick, Luddud and Simon, three very old men, earned their living by going about the neighborhood practicing conjuring, selling little luck-bags and rabbits' feet, and confirming the people in their superstition



This strain of music is the principal strain in the Opera and represents the happiness of the people when they feel free from the conjurers and their spells of superstition.

The opera begins in September 1884. Treemonisha, being eighteen years old, now starts up on her career as a teacher and leader.

## CAST OF CHARACTERS.

TREEMONISHA (Ned's adopted daughter) Soprano. MONISHA (Ned's wife) ..... Soprano. LUCY ..... Soprano. REMUS ..... Tenor. ANDY ..... Tenor.		CEPHUS ..... Tenor. ZODZETRICK ..... High Baritone. NED ..... Bass. LUDDUD ..... Bass. SIMON ..... Bass. PARSON ALLTALK ..... Bass.
CHORUS		

## CONTENTS.

Act 1.		Page
No 1.	OVERTURE . . . . .	5
" 2.	The Bag of Luck . . . . .	20
" 3.	The Corn-Huskers . . . . .	32
" 4.	We're Goin' Around . . . . .	35
" 5.	The Wreath . . . . .	49
" 6.	The Sacred Tree. . . . .	52
" 7.	Surprised . . . . .	66
" 8.	Treemonisha's Bringing Up . . . . .	67
" 9.	Good Advice . . . . .	75
" 10.	Confusion . . . . .	86
Act 2.		
" 11.	Superstition . . . . .	103
" 12.	Treemonisha in Peril . . . . .	112
" 13.	Frolic of the Bears . . . . .	120
" 14.	The Wasp-Nest . . . . .	129
" 15.	The Rescue. . . . .	133
" 16.	We will Rest Awhile . . . . .	136
" 17.	Going Home . . . . .	139
" 18.	Aunt Dinah has Blowed de Horn . . . . .	142
Act 3.		
" 19.	Prelude to Act 3 . . . . .	148
" 20.	I want to see my child . . . . .	152
" 21.	Treemonisha's Return . . . . .	156
" 22.	Wrong is Never Right . . . . .	168
" 23.	Abuse . . . . .	179
" 24.	When Villains Ramble Far and Near . . . . .	182
" 25.	Conjuror's Forgiven . . . . .	191
" 26.	We will Trust You as our Leader . . . . .	195
" 27.	A Real Slow Drag . . . . .	215