

## CHAPTER XII

## SOCIAL LIFE BEFORE THE WAR

A large percentage of the citizens were men of education and ability, some of them being specialists in their professional lines. Given to entertaining among themselves, and the "strangers within their gates", they formed a distinct set where culture and refinement were the dominant characteristics, thus creating a social condition that was morally healthful and uplifting. Cooking and serving were done entirely at home, by servants trained in the art for generations. Domestic service was then free from nomadic annoyance; therefore the ease and pleasures of entertaining were unhampered.

The chief amusements were dinner parties, cards, and dancing. Besides the old-fashioned square dances, reels, etc., graceful Spanish dances and gliding waltzes were indulged in. All danced, the matron as well as the maid; grandmothers could be seen dancing with their grandsons. No dance was ever given without the patronage of married people—this was a strict social requirement. Marcellini, an old Spanish negro, was the chief functionary at all the dances, as it was his "fiddle and bow" that furnished the music, the mention of which caused one lady to exclaim, "Sweet memories of happy days are revived with the thought of Marcellini and his dancing fiddle", while another says in verse:

I see him yet, his rolling eyes, his scanty woolen hair,  
His swaying form, his conscious pride, his almost lordly air,  
When all the white folks waiting stood, till he would draw his bow;

\* \* \* \* \*

And when he touched the familiar notes, the sober and the staid,  
Just felt the music in their heels, when Marcellini played.

Picnics in the summer-time and oyster roasts in the winter were pleasures that all could partake of. Camping for several days on the river bank, called "marooning", was a popular pastime. A period of moonlight nights was generally selected for marooning, so that moonlight water parties might be an attendant feature. Music was on hand to