experience of the negro’s every day life. One group deals with the celestial bodies and other natural objects and phenomena. Another is concerned with animals and plants, mostly native, and animal and vegetable products. Still another group takes in mankind, the parts and excretions of the human body, and the conditions, occupations, and activities of man. A fourth, perhaps the largest group, includes habitations, household and other utensils, and the various productions of man’s handicraft. In other words, the enigmas are drawn from the same sources as those found in other parts of the world.

Of course many of the riddles show the influence of contact with the civilizations of the Old World. We find here the ancient riddle of the Sphinx (no. 34; answer, “man”), unchanged except that it is expressed in the words of the negro; and we recognize another (no. 36; answer, “my equal”), similar to one we remember reading in an old book of riddles:

I'm that which He, whose spacious eye  
Can look through all eternity,  
Ne'er yet has seen, nor ever can,  
Though common to the eyes of man  

Answer: An equal.

Then there is the one about a candle (no. 63), whose European prototype is:

Little Miss Netticoat  
With a white petticoat  
And a red nose;  
The longer she stands  
The shorter she grows.

However, the overwhelming number of Surinam riddles are of native origin. The enigmas are, as a rule, short and simple, without