55. Whereas the Surinam negro sees in the broom a horse with a broken foot, his Virginian relative fancies a multiplicity of legs and forms his riddle accordingly:

What goes 'round
An' makes a thousand tracks?
Ans. — A broom.


57. Probably the „stump“ alludes to a broken needle, but we record the riddle as we heard it. The Surinam eye, quite naturally, sees in the thread a breech cloth, whereas in other parts of the world the tail of some animal is suggested.


58. This is a play on the words, „lai“, meaning „drawer“, and „jai“, signifying „guess“. It calls to mind, among others, a German conundrum which we remember reading in a collection of riddles published by Karl Simrock in „Die deutschen Volksbücher“. It is of a similar nature, but wholly different subject:

„Es ist weg und bleibt weg,
Ist Tag und Nacht weg,
Und jedermann sieht es doch.

Ein Weg.“

It is away and stays away
Is day and night away
Yet every one can see it.
A Way.

60. Evidently refers to the rolling process in the manufacture of cigars.

63. The riddle of the burning candle is of European origin, and universal in civilized communities. The version quoted in the introduction is one of many that could be adduced.

64. In Sierra Leone we find a similar riddle, reported by Cronise and Ward (loc. cit., p. 195), as follows:

„One big ho' se bin deh, he get one post, no mo’.“

Ans. — Umbrella.

The Surinam riddle was no doubt independently conceived, being obviously suggested, in each case, by the nature of the object.

It is interesting to compare the method of presentation of this riddle and others from West-Africa with those of Surinam. The introductory phrase, „Mi mama ben de“, or something else „ben de“, has its counterpart in Sierra Leone in such phrases as „One big ho' so bin deh“, and „One man bin deh“, curiously similar, even in the dialect. From the same author we also learn that sometimes the propounder heralds the riddle by the exclamation „Hill“, implying that the solution will demand some mental effort, just as the climbing of a hill requires physical exertion. If it is agreeable to the party to have him proceed they say, „How“. We find a strikingly similar form among the Saramacca Bush-negroes of Surinam, who according to Schuchardt (loc. cit., p. 41) usher in the riddle with the word „Mato“, to which the compiler, Daniel Yveraar, quite correctly attaches the meaning „guess“; the reply being, „Tonganie“, i. e. „You have the word“. But in an eighteenth century vocabulary by C. L. Schumann in the same