

## “Ten Little Negroes” (1885)

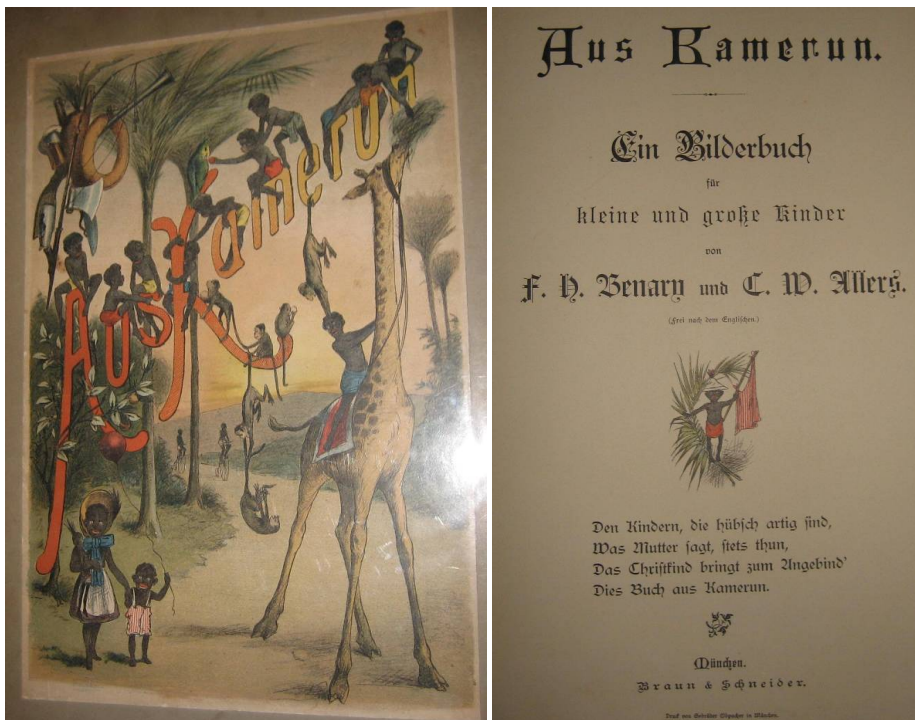
### Abstract

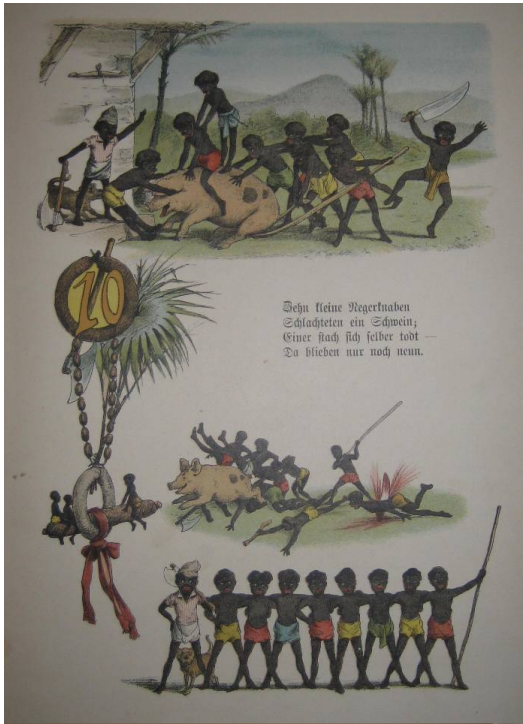
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From the latter third of the nineteenth century, in the context of the “scramble for Africa” and the development of a new consumer culture based on catchy images that flattered white European audiences, stereotyped images of Africans became increasingly commonplace in books and toys aimed at young Germans. Such images served to educate in two senses. They were used to teach particular skills (how to read, how to count, how to perform social roles), and they also served to instruct Germans on their inherent superiority over the world’s non-white inhabitants. This example is the earliest known German adaptation of a hit American minstrel song from 1868 entitled “Ten Little Injuns,” in which the ten characters whittle themselves down to none by dying or otherwise disappearing in various gruesome ways. The song was soon adapted as “Ten Little Negroes,” in which form it became a staple of minstrel performances in the U.S. and the U.K. In 1885, the German author F. H. Benary and illustrator C. W. Allers re-wrote the rhyme to capitalize on Germany’s recent colonial acquisitions and published it in their children’s book, *Aus Kamerun* [From Cameroon].

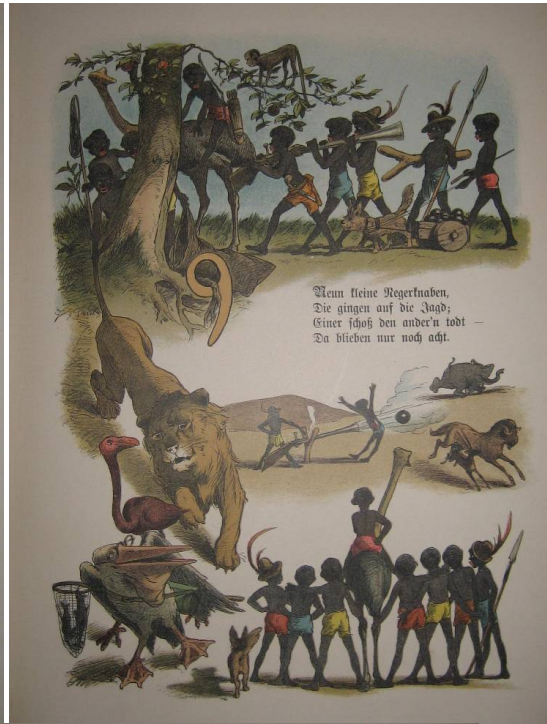
### Source

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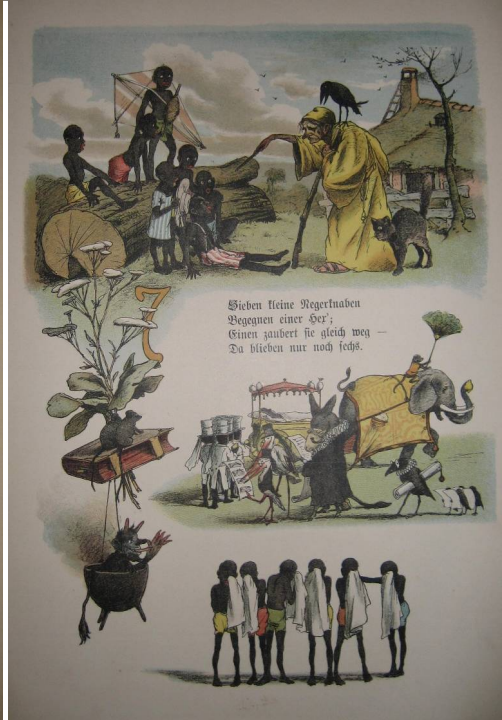
Zehn kleine Negernaben  
Schlachteten ein Schwein;  
Einer stach sich selber todt —  
Da blieben nur noch neun.



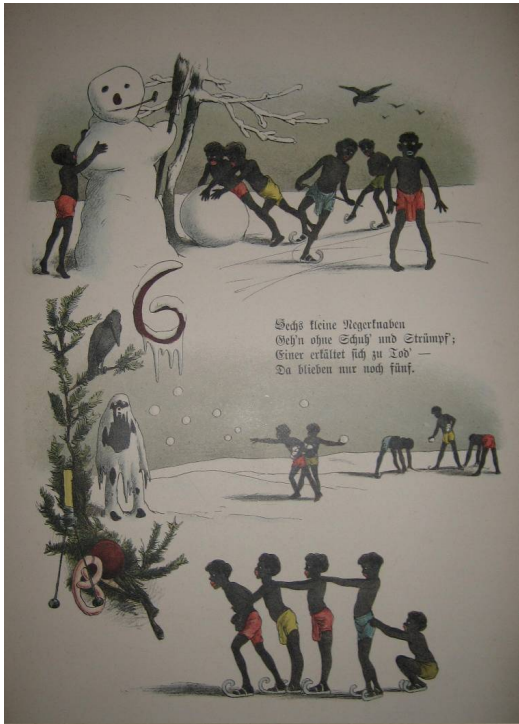
Neun kleine Negernaben,  
Die gingen auf die Jagd;  
Einer schoß den ander'n todt —  
Da blieben nur noch acht.



Acht kleine Negernaben,  
Die gingen nach nahen Naken;  
Dort einen festig der Bauer todt —  
Da blieben nur noch sieben.



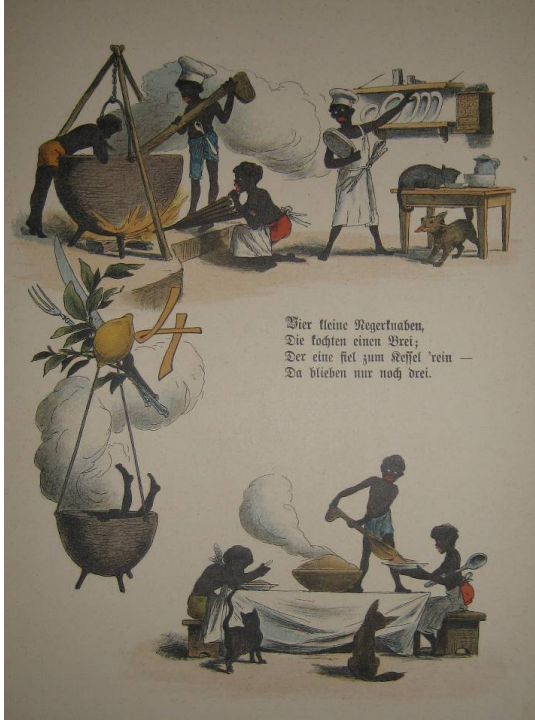
Sieben kleine Negernaben  
Begannen einer Hez;  
Einen gaudert sie gleich weg —  
Da blieben nur noch sechs.



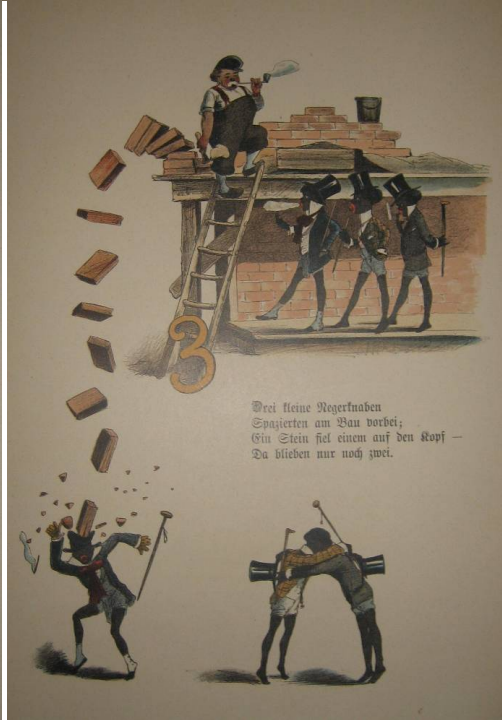
Sechs kleine Negertnaben  
 Geh'n ohne Schuh' und Strümpf;  
 Einer erkället sich zu Tod' —  
 Da blieben nur noch fünf.



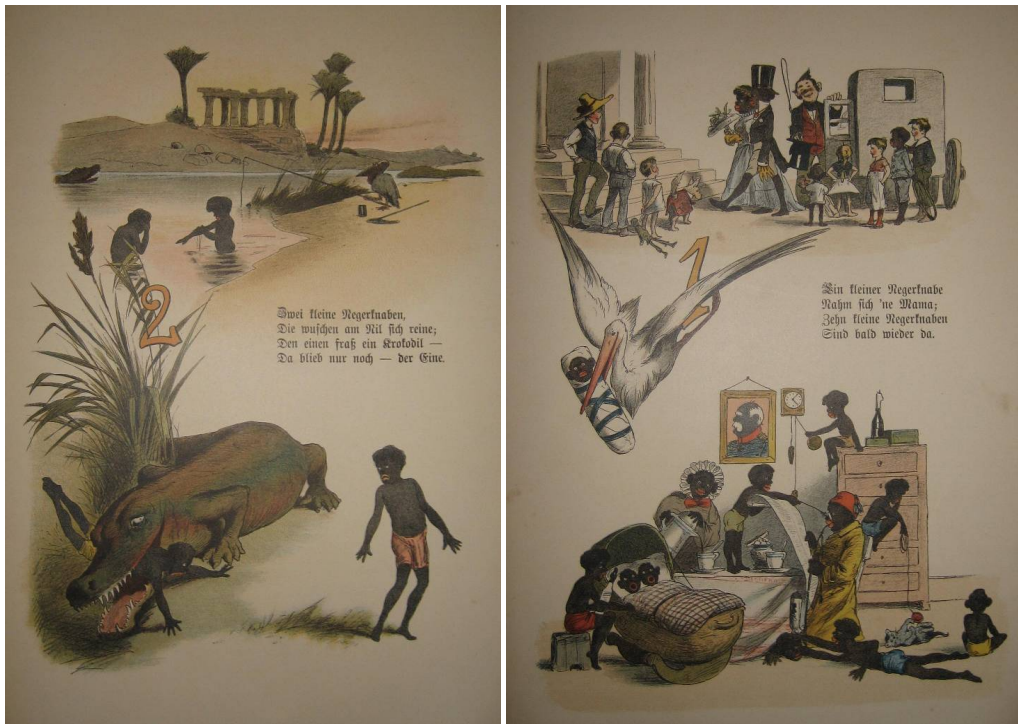
Fünf kleine Negertnaben,  
 Die tranken bay'reich' Bier;  
 Der eine trank, bis daß er hart —  
 Da blieben nur noch vier.



Vier kleine Negertnaben,  
 Die lochten einen Vrei;  
 Der eine fiel zum Kessel 'rein —  
 Da blieben nur noch drei.



Drei kleine Negertnaben  
 Spazierten am Bau vorbei;  
 Ein Stein fiel einem auf den Kopf —  
 Da blieben nur noch zwei.



Source: F. H. Benary and C. W. Allers, *Aus Kamerun. Ein Bilderbuch für kleine und große Kinder*. Munich: Braun & Schneider, 1885, images courtesy of Gerd Fahrenhorst.

This analysis was provided by Jeff Bowersox of the *Black Central Europe* project, <https://blackcentraleurope.com/sources/1850-1914/ten-little-negroes-1885/>

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