COMPOSITIONAL PROCESS OF "THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS"

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To begin my composition, I started with the chess board that the whole *Through the Looking Glass* is based on. Since a chess board is eight squares by eight squares, I decided to base my composition off of an octatonic scale, a scale that contains eight notes rather than the traditional seven of a major or minor scale. I decided to use the A octatonic scale simply because Alice begins with an "A." This scale includes the notes A, Bb, C, C#, D#, E, F# and G. I then lined these notes up, one note per square, on the top row of the chess board.

For the next row, I simply used the same scale but started it on Bb, the next row with C, then with C#, etc. I then decided that I was going to look at the three characters, Alice, The Red Queen, and The White Queen, to use as material for my composition. I took each character and traced their moves out on my musical chessboard. After that I looked at which notes they passed through and created melodies based off of these notes. The first theme was Alice's theme. The notes I used were, Bb, A, G, F#, E, D#, C#, D#, and I used an arbitrary rhythm. Since Alice goes through a looking glass I decided to use a musical technique called "retrograde" to create the next part of the piece. I simply took the notes of her theme and wrote them backwards: D#, C#, D#, E, F#, G, A, Bb. After I introduced this theme I laid both themes on top of one another to create a new section of the piece.

The next section demonstrates the White Queen's theme. It uses the notes Bb, A, G, F#, E, D#, C#, C again with an arbitrary rhythm. I then laid Alice's original theme on top of the

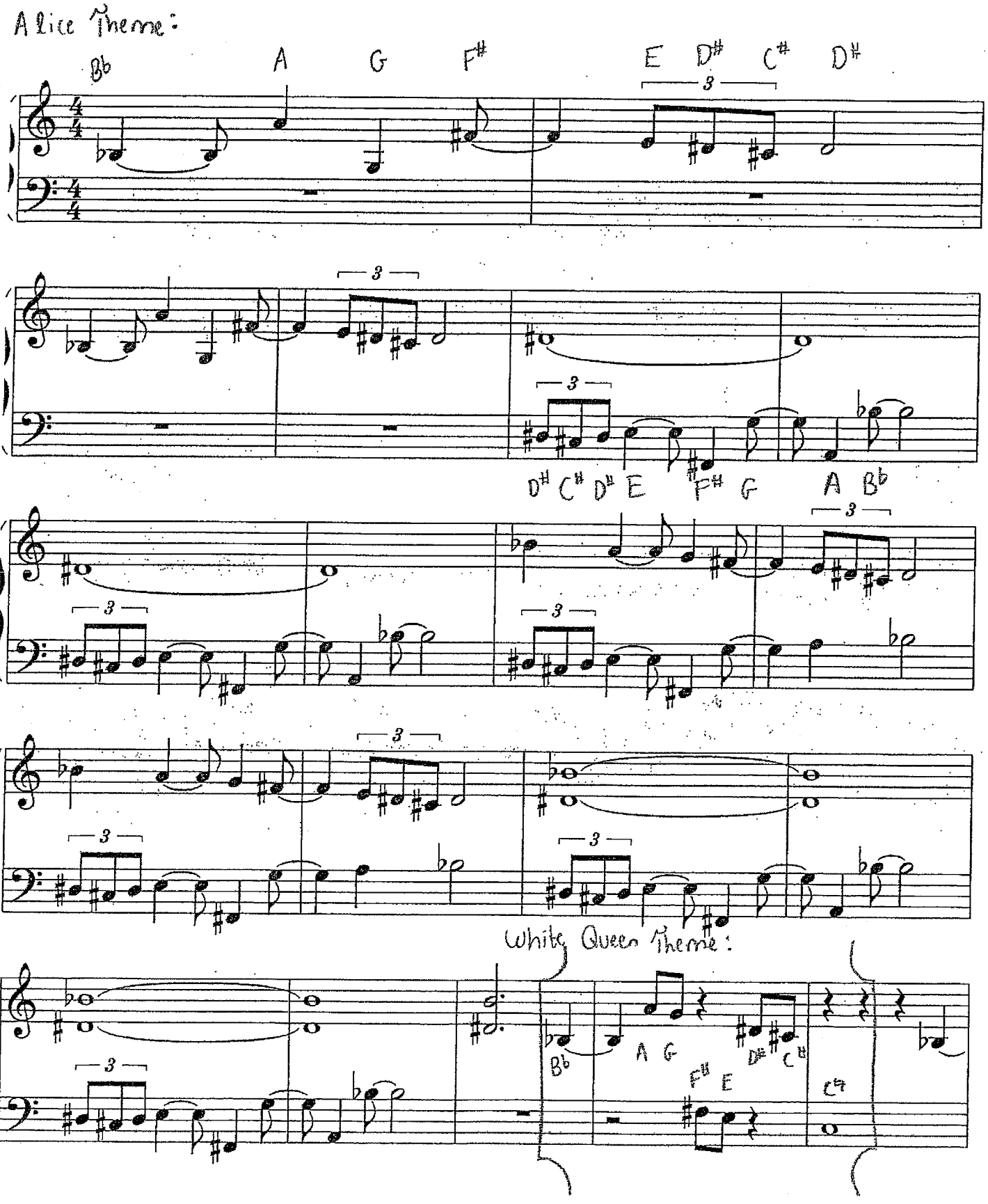
White Queen's theme to represent them meeting each other. The next section of the piece uses the notes D#, F#, A, and C to represent the Red Queen. I put a little more thought into the rhythm of this part because I wanted to give life to the Red Queen who always moved so quickly throughout the book. I used a running sixteenth-note arpeggio to symbolize her fast moving personality. To signify Alice and the Red Queen meeting I simply used the same technique as I did earlier in the piece: I laid the two themes on top of one another to create the next section. The finale was again the Red Queen and Alice together but with a louder more boisterous feeling to it.

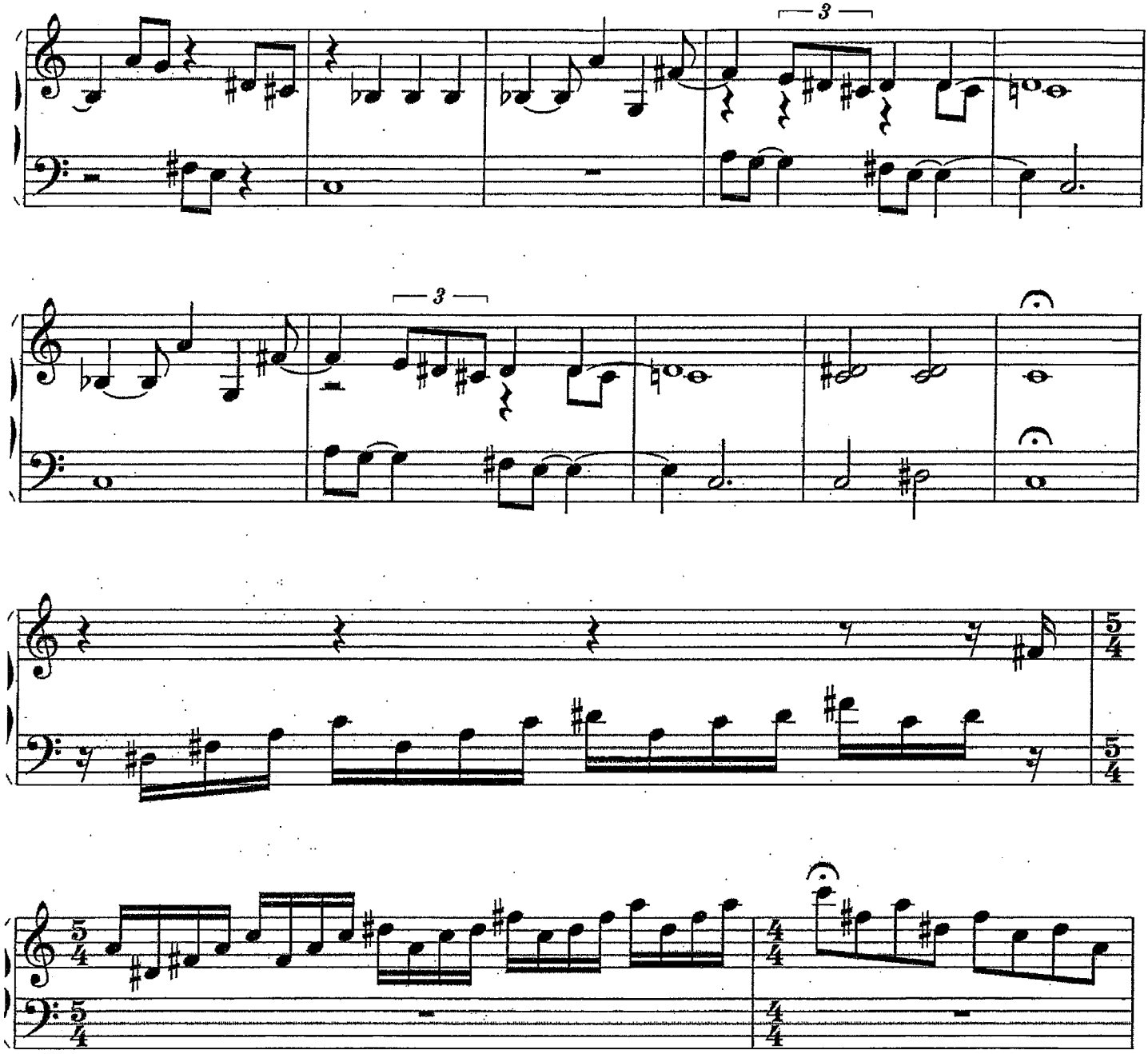
All in all, the construction of this piece was very methodical just like I think Lewis Carroll was in his construction of his two master works. I also enjoyed the logical nature of the creation of this composition in that it reminded me of Lewis Carroll's mathematical nature and how he used that in his creative works. The juxtaposition of logic and reasoning with creativity is always extremely fascinating to me which I why I enjoyed the composition of this piece of music.

A	Bb	C	C#	D#	E	F#	G
Bb	C	C#	D#	E	F#	G	A
C	C#	D#	E	F#	G	A	Bb
C#	D#	E	F#	G	A	Bb	C
D#	E	F#	G	A	Bb	C	C#
E	F#	G	A	Bb	C	C#	D#
F#	G	A	Bb	C	C#	D#	E
G	A	Bb	C	C#	D#	E	F#
A	Bb	C	C#	D#	E	F#	G

Through the Looking Glass

Philip K. Smith

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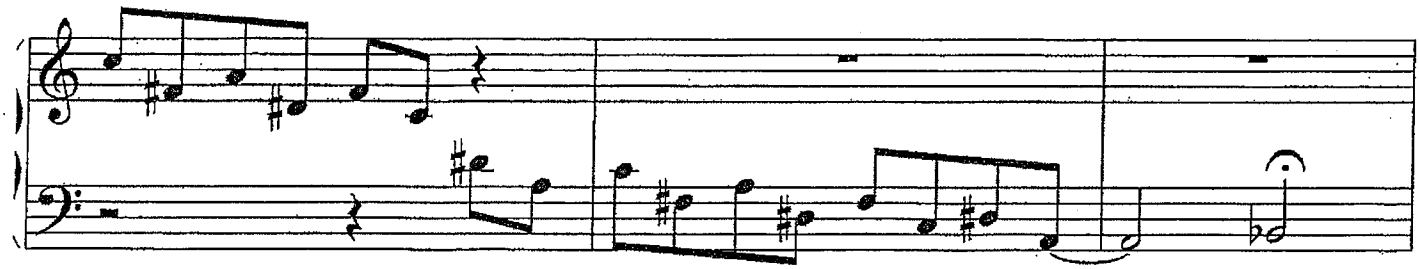
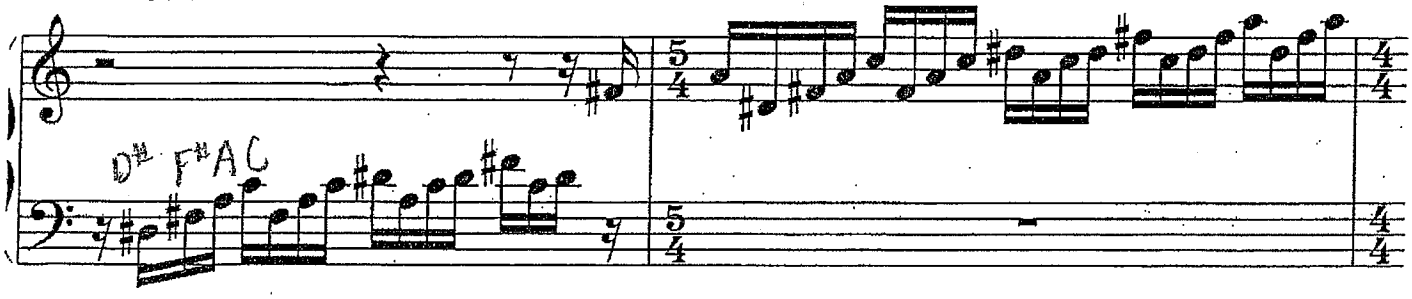
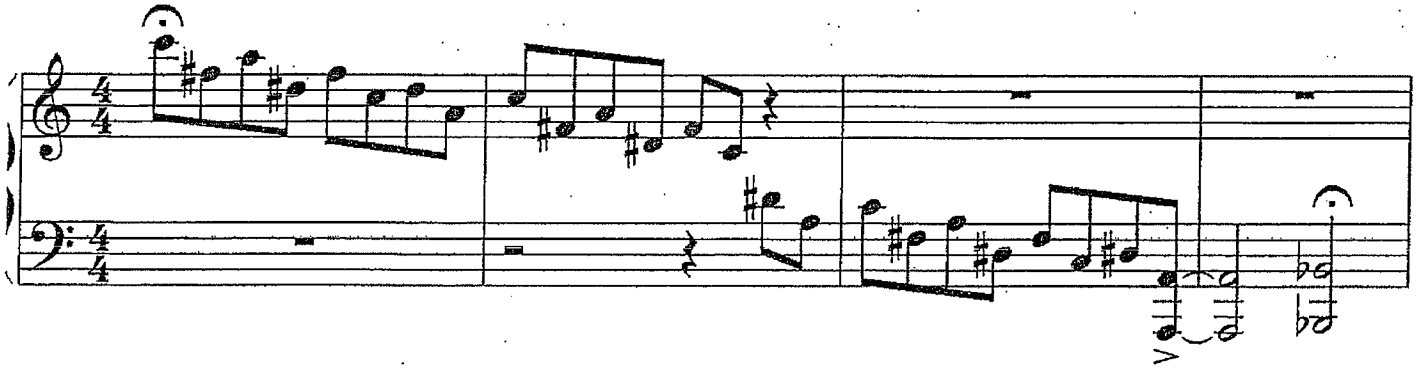
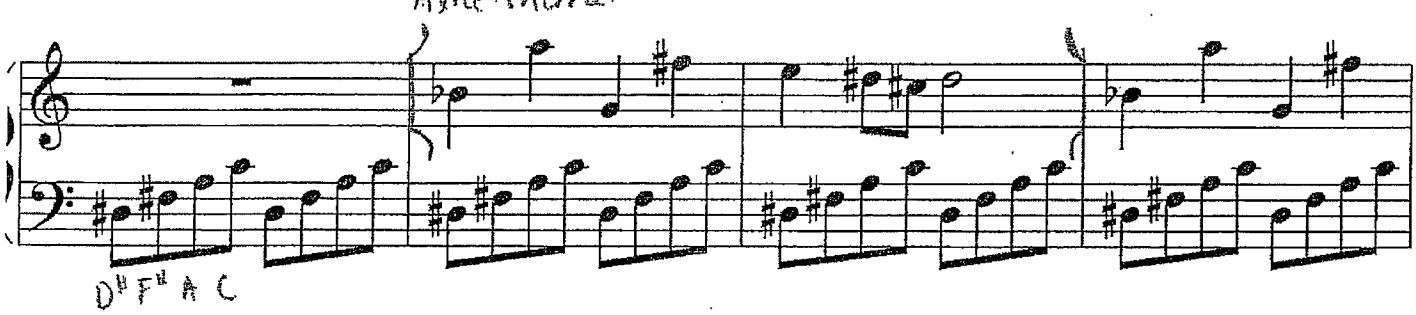


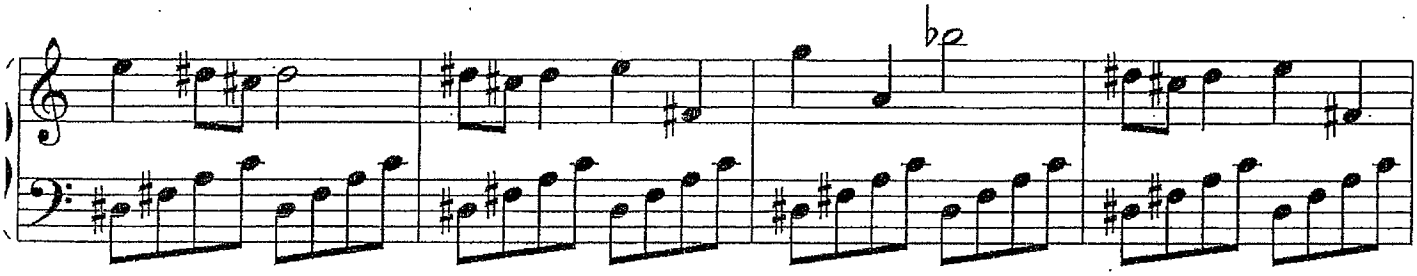
Red Queen Theme:





Alice Theme:

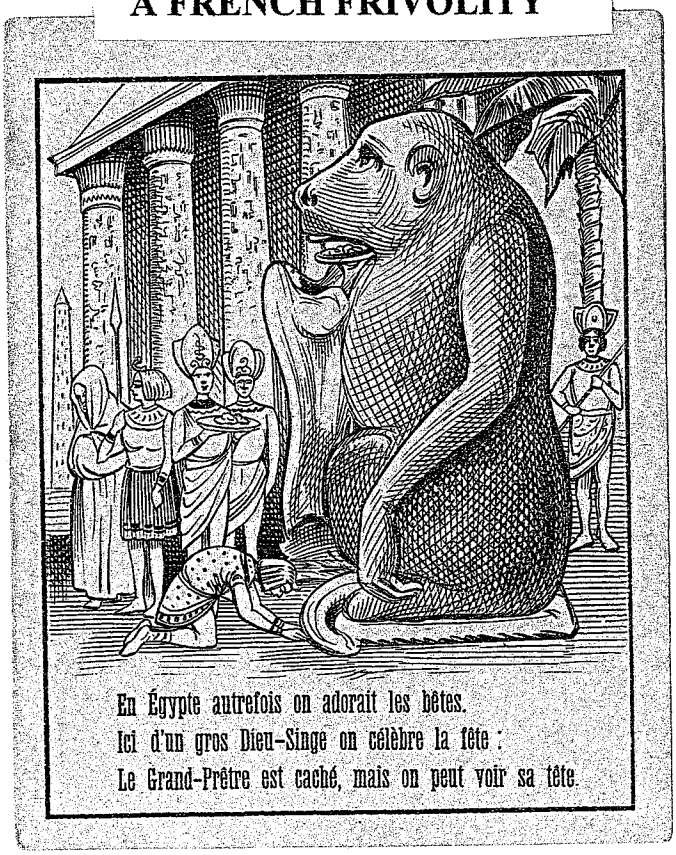




Alice theme:

Red Queen

D♯ F♯ A

C

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