

Some night bird's solitary song,
Or heard the summer midnight breeze
Whispering pity 'mong the trees,
While chirping crickets skipped around—
This even was a welcome sound,
It made the silence less profound.

'Twas midnight past, she came in view
Of the lone hut which once she knew.
She paused, her child lay sleeping there,
Instinctively she said a prayer.
She stole inside; then kissed his face,
And would his little form embrace,
She must refrain else he might wake,
Too long a stay she then might make,
If she once more but heard his voice
Then her fond heart might so rejoice,
As to forget that she must stay
But two short hours and then away
To reach her work by dawn of day.
She gently lay down by his side,
But feared to clasp him to her breast,
She watched him with a mother's pride,
But dared not close her eyes to rest.

And then came wanderings of the mind,
Visions of hope, but ill defined;
Flashes of light, but their short stay
Left greater darkness when away.
Fragments of dreams which seemed to
keep
Vain struggles with their parent Sleep.

Her time was quickly up, she felt
An awful sinking of the heart,
Now from her sleeping child to part.
That pang which a sad parting dealt,
The grief as by his side she knelt,
To whisper low a mother's prayer,
That God would of her child take care.
She kissed him and the wild flow'rs spread
With tenderest care around his bed,
As if to her he there lay dead.
Her tears fell fast in heart-felt pain.
She looked to heaven for hope—in vain,
And sobbed as she dared not remain,
She left—but ne'er saw him again.*

Cleopa sat within a bower.
Made by herself each leisure hour,
There she would read, and think, and
dream,
Of what this transient life might seem,
And how far she might wish that Hope
Had brighter prospects in its scope.
Here she could write and paint and meet
With Mara when 'twas most discreet,
And speak of love, or hope, or fear,
And of desires to each most dear,

When he alone could then be near.
For she was favored and she might
Do that which gave her most delight—
Her crafty patron wished to be
Indulgent to extremity.
His final purposes were vile,
It was his plan to court her smile,
Pretending that he wished to win
Her heart without a thought of sin.
Thus by degrees lead her aside
From that which is a woman's pride.
Cleopa well knew what this meant,
But dare not his attempts resent.
For Mara's sake and for her own
No angry feeling must be shown.
And Mara, too, well understood
That from this evil might come good.
But none must yet their love suspect,
Or Mara's visits e'er detect.

Thus while a captive she was held,
To do no task was she compelled,
But from servility withheld.
A prisoner with patronage,
Secure within a gilded cage—
Like some poor bird that dared not fly
From earth towards the sun-lit sky.

So oft, when near the close of day,
Cleopa to this bower would stray,
And watch the red rays fade away.
There flowers gave out their rich perfume,
Others were bursting into bloom,
And birds, and butterflies, and bees

* In Saladin's (Stewart Ross) touching account of the Slave Trade (page 53) he says:

"Frederick Douglass (the late Hon. Fred Douglass) to whom I have already alluded, refers on one page, and on one page only, to his mother; but the sentence or two in which he alludes to her speak volumes of heroism, and tenderness, and devotion. Any delicacy of moral sentiment was an inconvenient trait in a slave, and to suppress the domestic affections and effectually brutalize the instincts, child-rearers, as I have shown, were not permitted to know their own parents. Douglass writes:

"I never saw my mother to know her as such more than four or five times in my life; and each of these times was of very short duration, and at night. She was held by a Mr. Stewart, who lived about twelve miles from my home. She made her journey to see me in the night, traveling the whole distance on foot, after the performance of her day's work. She was a field hand, and a whipping is the penalty of not being in the field at sunrise. . . . I do not recollect ever seeing my mother by the light of day. When she was with me in the night she would lie down with me and get me to sleep; but long before I awoke she was gone. Very little communication ever took place between us. Death soon ended what little we could have while she lived, and with it her hardships and suffering. She died when I was about seven years old."

"Than this poor negro woman visiting her little boy stealthily in the night there is nothing grander of its kind in the heroic annals of the human race."