

The poor, worn negress lay there dead.
Then came loud sobs, and tears, and sighs,
And hands were raised to weeping eyes.
Few moments longer Mara stopped,
His tear upon the dead face dropped.
He looked around, 'twas coming night,
A few stood by—how sad their plight!
His heart was sickened at the sight,
He waved adieu—then took his flight.

There was a halo round the moon,
The stars that night appeared quite dim,
Tired slaves lay down, it was a boon
To get some rest; some sung a hymn,
Some laughed and danced as if the night
Was far more welcome than the day,
A time in which they took delight,
'Twas partial freedom in a way,
For these were hours from toil most free—
A short, sweet time of liberty.
Some prayed, while others sat outside
Chatting, and cheerful as if Hope
Had now spread out its pinions wide.
To give their simple thoughts free scope.
And tales were told, and songs were sung,
Just seemingly as free from care,
As if some pitying spirit flung
Oblivion around them there.
Thus time in social converse passed,
Some wished that it could longer last.
Soon one by one went off to rest,
To some a period most blest,
To dream of being no more oppressed.

Before this at the close of day,
When shadows slowly crept around,
And with a stillness most profound,
A poor slave woman stole away
From her companions sad or gay,
To do what she did thrice before—
A chance which she might have no more,
She went to see her little son,
After her day's hard work was done,
To see her child who had been sold
Ere he was scarcely six years old.
This loving task she did by night,
When no one might detect her flight,
And though she greatly needed rest,
The feeling in a mother's breast,
To clasp again her only child,
Lent her an impulse almost wild,
'Twas all of heaven she ever knew—
Those few sweet hours when she could
rest
With her beloved child in view,
Or when she clasped him to her breast.
She had not seen him for a year.

This grievous loss brought many a tear.
Twelve weary miles she had to walk,
Once more to have him smile and talk,
And yet she shuddered as she thought
That he perhaps had her forgot.
To see him 'twould delightful be,
E'en for one hour—felicity.

Back to the field before sunrise
She must return or feel the whip,
The odious rule was to chastise
All who an hour of work should skip,
But on she went on her lone way,
Her thoughts upon her child most dwelt,
Yet sometimes too her thoughts would
s:ray
As to why Fate so hardly dealt
With certain creatures so severe
While others were held far more dear.
And like impressions would intrude,
Though in her mind their form was crude,
They might be shaped in words thus meek
While tears were glist'ning on her cheek:

"O Lord, O God pray pity me,
Against my nature I have striv'n,
Whether to curse this foul decree,
Or wait submissively for heaven.
Why tender feelings so create,
And yet those feelings violate?
Why make a bondswoman of me,
And from this curse let others free?
The act of Thy mysterious hand
Has pressed upon my brow Thy brand—
I'm one of a degraded band;
The cause I cannot understand."

Poor, humble slave, with love as pure
As angels have, 'tis said, for man,
She fain would happiness secure
For those who even her race would ban.

Then steadily along the road
She plodding went, she had no load
But that great burden on her heart,
Of which no one could take a part,
And now it troubled her still more,
That she no pretty trifles bore,
Something to please her helpless boy,
Her visit might bring greater joy.
She would some little present bring,
But could not buy the simplest thing,
Some trifling toy with which to play—
She had no means for that to pay.
Some gift from her might cheer his hours—
At last she plucked a few wild flow'rs.

The moonbeams now out brighter shone:
How strange for her to be alone!
She oft heard as she went along