

To say that he opposed God's Book,
And quoted texts his thoughts to shake,
He'd say such texts were a mistake.
They would reply that he rebelled
And from the church should be expelled.
Ben laughed at threats, as oft was known,
And quick was his defiance shown.
He had a log church of his own
Built for him by the slaves around,
Who there each Sabbath could be found,
Ready to sing, or shout, or pray—
'Twas recreation in a way,
As 'tis for the refined to-day,
Who little care what doctrines are
If only they prove popular.
In Ben's log church he said that he
Would preach a gospel pure and free
From all taint of cupidity.
Let parasites to grandeur preach
He'd try humanity to teach
In spite of numerous pious knaves
Who held and bought and sold poor
slaves.*

Yet, 'twas a wonder how old Ben
Escaped the thoughts of wicked men,
Each planter seemed his enemy,
And many threatened he should be
Transported to eternity.
Shots had been fired, some wounds he got;
But after all he heeded not.
He went on as he had before
With the same preaching o'er and o'er.
His friends were watchful day and night
Clearing each danger out of sight.
If some poor slave tried to escape
Ben would his way to freedom shape.
He was conductor some did say
Of the great underground railway,
And for the service took no pay.

'Twas near the dawn, the roseate east
Had a faint blush which soon increased,
The guardian angels of the night,
Ere they now took their farewell flight,
Shed round the world the rosy light.
Birds seemed to chant to the new day
As if to clear men's cares away.
A few stars still looked down on earth
As if to greet some seraph's birth,

For earth to them might seem to be
Barren for such nativity.
All nature seemed in peaceful mood
More exquisite in solitude,
And dew-drops glittered in each flower
To sanctify this peaceful hour
And usher in the day of rest,
One of repose for the oppressed.

In a small hut down near the sea
Lived Noble Ben contentedly,
He still kept on the old estate
And on its master liked to wait.
Ben had a kind and grateful heart
And would not from his old home part.
He was no more a slave, but free.
His master gave him liberty.
And here he mostly lived alone,
Those liked him best to whom best known
He made the most he could of life
Twice he had lost a faithful wife.
A needy master had her sold,
But Ben's affections ne'er grew cold.
No other woman took her place,
Such act to him would be disgrace.
Since she was rudely snatched from him
The sunshine of his life grew dim
Though 'twas the law that a slave sale
At once dissolved the marriage bond—
This rule did in the church prevail,
No preacher would that law assail.
Ben's rule of right went far beyond,
He had strict notions of his own,
On some occasions these were shown."

Ed had just said his morning prayer,
And sat to take his humble fare,
A gentle rap was heard within,
He quickly cried, "Come in, come in,"
The door was slowly opened wide,
He saw three strangers stand outside,
A man, a woman, and a guide,
The guide he knew, for oft before
He had brought strangers to his door.
They entered and were made to feel

"A reverend professor of the Methodist church has decided that it is perfectly lawful for an owner to separate husband and wife, and that, if there be any sin in the case, it rests upon the shoulders of the slaves who ought not to have taken vows which their condition disqualifies them from keeping.

A Baptist association in Virginia has granted permission to a slave member to take a second wife, his first having been sold in another part of the country; and another association in Georgia is reported to have voted that a separation of man and wife, by sale or otherwise to such a distance as precludes personal intercourse, is considered by God as equivalent to death." Fay's "Miscellaneous Works on Slavery," page 428.

* The Rev. R. Furman, D.D., said "The right of holding slaves is clearly established in the holy Scriptures, both by precept and example." At his death the advertisement announcing the sale of his effects specified the following chattels:

"A library of a miscellaneous character, chiefly theological; twenty-seven negroes, some of them very fine; two mules, one horse and waggon."