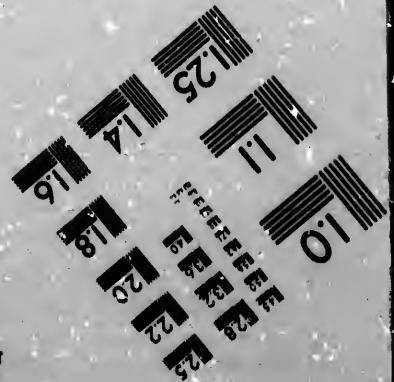
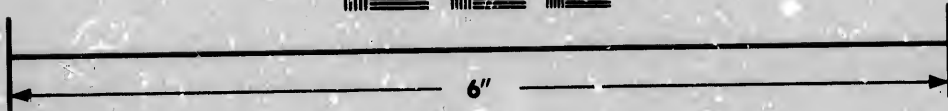
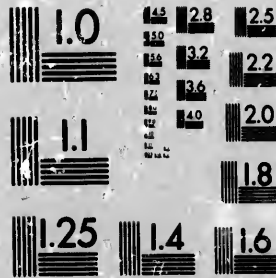


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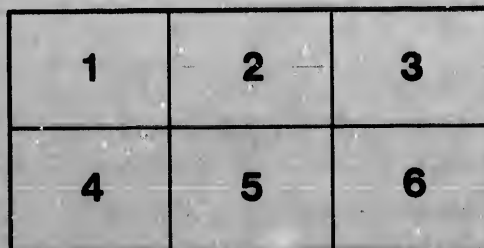
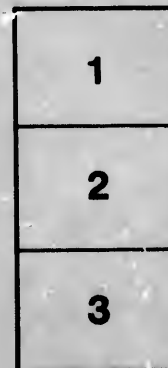
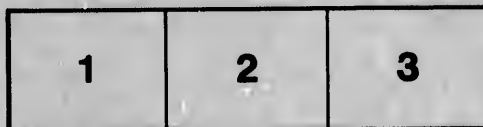
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# CLEOPA

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BY

William McDonell,

Author of "Manita," Etc.



# CLEOPA

By WILLIAM McDONELL,

Author of "Manita," Etc.

In beauteous, glowing worlds on high,  
The gems in azure space that shine, *ex*  
There may be beings that often sigh  
For orbs more bright and more divine,  
And they may feel, though grand their  
sphere,

It may not thus to them appear.  
Like mortals they might wish for change:  
'T would be more beautiful though strange,  
And they may think their only light  
Flows down on them from worlds more  
bright,

And fancy as they often see  
Our earth just like a brilliant star,  
Illuming wide that it must be  
A region of felicity,  
A home where radiant spirits are,  
From which they get each genial ray  
That lights them on their lonely way ;  
Where happy creatures day by day  
Spend lives of bliss, and where no night  
Can bid splendence flee away,  
Or days' effulgence take its flight.  
Where flowers with perfume fill the air  
As if their bloom would never fade  
While music murmurs everywhere  
On roseate hills, in groves' soft shade  
Where all of peace that man can know,  
Or all that love can e'er reveal,

Or all that beauty can bestow,  
Brings ecstasy each one can feel,  
Where nought can virtue ever crush,  
Or evil bring a dread or fear,  
Or cause the modest cheek to blush,  
Or start a single sigh or tear ;  
Where morn, and noon, and eve, and night  
To all alike fresh pleasures bring,  
Each change exalting pure delight,  
Each soul 'mid beauty wandering,  
No need of Hope, its pinions here  
Are never plumed by fresh desire,  
Just as no rainbow will appear  
When skies look bright or clouds retire ;  
No anxious hour, no dread of Care,  
No doubts with ev'ry passing breath,  
But sublime beauty everywhere,  
And life that never ends in death.

'T was thus such beings may have thought  
Of earth as being a paradise,  
As it might be if men had tried  
To make the common good their pride,  
But could such gentle souls be brought  
To leave their own celestial home,  
And mark the sin, and shame, and vice  
Where nowhere else 'neath heaven's dome,  
Except perhaps on earth alone,  
Is found with ev'ry foul device,

The revelation then would be  
 To startle them to sympathy,  
 And pity men who might be blessed  
 If they would only be content  
 With all that could bring peace and rest,  
 No anxious hour being ever spent.  
 The earth's abundance has for all,  
 If each had but a rightful share,  
 Or opportunity but fair  
 To keep from penury and care,  
 Then none for aid need ever call,  
 Nor none of happiness despair.  
 But man, rapacious in his greed  
 For wealth, and eminence, and power,  
 Cared not for those he brought to need  
 Nor for the wounds he gave which bleed,  
 So that he might from hour to hour  
 Grasp far more than he could devour.  
 And nations too with impious hand  
 Have dared to seize what Nature gave  
 And keep from men the use of land,  
 That gift to all which should be free—  
 Such boon would crush out penury.  
 Withold this right you make a slave,  
 Or oft a criminal to brave  
 Laws drawn by some official knave.  
 What justice ever can be shown  
 When but few men can gather wealth  
 And call vast tracts of land their own  
 While thousands live almost by stealth,  
 Nor own of earth a single spot  
 Neath which to rest when all's forgot,  
 Who spend sad years in care and gloom  
 Wishing and waiting for the tomb.

Thus, thus for ages earth has been  
 A centre for the vilest deeds,  
 Injustice opening every scene  
 Of wickedness which none exceeds,  
 While war and blood in every land  
 Has been the game usurpers play,  
 Crushing whoever dares to stand  
 With plea or protest in the way;  
 And then that hideous wrong and shame,  
 That great iniquity of all,  
 When men for sordid gain became  
 Actors in scenes which yet appal.  
 When human beings were seized and sold  
 And packed down in the slave ship's hold,  
 And hurried from their homes afar,  
 The man, the wife, the young, the old,  
 Just as so many beasts still are  
 None of them need for pity crave,  
 Fetters foretold their horrid fate—  
 Dear kindred then must separate.  
 Their doom was fixed, each was a slave.  
 The dread remembrance of those wrongs  
 For ages hence will bring to view

Men driven on in bleeding throngs  
 By Christian, Pagan, Turk and Jew—  
 No more cheered by their native songs,  
 The simple verse each mother knew—  
 Each touching strain kept Hope in view.  
 No poet's pen, no painter's art,  
 No tale of tearful sympathies  
 Can ever tell the thousandth part—  
 The wails, the woes, the fiendish dart,  
 The poor crushed flesh, the broken heart,  
 The blight which slavery brought on  
 these—  
 That infamy of infamies.

In Carolina where the sea  
 On its low coast holds revelry  
 Where sand isles shift and each lagoon  
 Has far more changes than the moon,  
 Where oft the sun with torrid beam  
 Dries up a river or a stream—  
 Flashes on Albemarle's Sound,  
 And on the marshy beds around.  
 Still from that flat, malarious coast  
 Wealth comes of which the planters boast,  
 Nor cared they much if each tired breath  
 Which brought them gold brought others  
 death.

A thousand slaves from morn till night  
 With rigid taskmaster in sight,  
 Or overseer who had the power  
 To vent his spleen from hour to hour  
 On any who excuse would make  
 A single minute's rest to take.  
 Each gang is kept at constant toil  
 Neath sun rays that the blood might boil.  
 Though heavy showers come pouring down,  
 Or threatening storms that round them  
 frown,  
 Or aches, disease, or thrilling pain,  
 Work must be done, none dare complain;  
 Cotton, and corn, and rice, must be  
 Ever attended constantly,  
 Yet slaves who seldom dare work stop,  
 Ready from toil almost to drop,  
 Had not one interest in the crop.

It was a day when scarce a breeze  
 Stirred leaves upon the scattered trees,  
 Or caused a ripple on the shore  
 Where waves oft dashed with sullen roar,  
 The heated air being much the same  
 As if it from a furnace came.  
 Still here were serfs that out must stay,  
 Though parched winds shrunk their hearts  
 away,  
 Those who would have for shelter prayed  
 Looked longingly towards the shade,



Where neath a large umbrageous tree  
 The overseer sat sleepily,  
 But still he watched each worker's hoe  
 Move steadily along each row,  
 And shouted if one wearied back,  
 At labor bent, in work grew slack—  
 In thought he thus would slaves attack:  
 "Feel touched for them!—no, not the  
 least,

Each one was scarcely more than brute,  
 As cannibals they all would feast,  
 This was a fact none could dispute.  
 They all are made for white men's use  
 And will not work without abuse."  
 Such was the character bestowed  
 On those called slaves, yet it was known  
 That such oppressed ones often showed  
 True kindness almost theirs alone.

Just then a woman worn and faint,  
 Who feared of ills to make complaint,  
 Dropped on the hot and dusty ground,  
 Quick all the negroes stared around,  
 A few rushed out to raise her head,  
 And some exclaimed, "She's dead, she's  
 dead."

The overseer from his snug place  
 Frowned on them with a sullen face.  
 He felt annoyed to be disturbed,  
 His temper rose, 'twas not soon curbed,  
 He swore he would each negro damn—  
 "Back fools! You know it's all a sham.  
 She's often worked that trick before,  
 And now she's trying it once more,  
 Back, back to work and let her stay,  
 We'll give her physic right away,  
 A certain cure, sure and complete,  
 'Twill quickly bring her to her feet,  
 I've tried it often as you know,  
 Scarce more at times than one smart  
 blow—

"Here Mara, here," he shouted out,  
 Which startled some of those about  
 And frightened others who well knew  
 That what he threatened he would do.  
 "Here Mara, quick," and then he took  
 A whip from out a corner nook.

Some negro children on that day  
 Were out at work not far away.  
 A young man had them in his charge,  
 Who often let them run at large,  
 With Ethloph blood he was defiled,  
 Though said to be his owner's child.  
 He watched them work and heard them  
 shout,  
 And liked to see them romp about.  
 Each had to do some little task,

Scarce more from children could one ask,  
 Some trifling job, half work half play,  
 He'd give to each from day to day,  
 Unless pressed by the overseer,  
 And then he'd seem to be severe,  
 But when that strict man left their view  
 The boys and girls again well knew  
 That they could work just as before,  
 Their manager would ask no more.  
 He had a heart and pitied those  
 Who dreamt not yet of future woes,  
 Nor of the storms which might descend  
 To sweep away an only friend.  
 Poor simple things, they never thought  
 To what condition they were brought.  
 They saw the sun and the blue sky,  
 Their childish hopes were just as high,  
 Few knew the meaning of a sigh.  
 Their songs and laughter, jokes and play  
 Delighted them from day to day.  
 For these young creatures he could feel,  
 He would not yet their state reveal,  
 For they could scarcely understand  
 Their degradation in the land.  
 Though he was resolute and brave  
 His tender feelings never gave  
 Him nerve to say each was a slave—  
 A vassal, such as he was held,  
 Against which state his heart rebelled.  
 He might be either kept or sold  
 'Till he had grown infirm or old,  
 Just as his owner needed gold.  
 Yet he was favored in a way,  
 He need not toil day after day,  
 He mostly had his own desire,  
 But must not from the place retire—  
 'Twas said his owner was his sire,  
 Perhaps indulged on this account  
 He was allowed a fair amount  
 Of liberty in many ways.  
 To school he had been early sent  
 On learning much his mind seemed bent.  
 His skill in gardening did amaze,  
 The flowers he grew got all the praise,  
 Yet strange he mostly liked to be  
 With children in captivity,  
 For them he had great sympathy.  
 Of such he was made overseer,  
 But subject to a senior near.  
 This task to him was his delight  
 And often privately at night  
 He'd teach some older slaves to write—  
 A dangerous task, for 'twas a crime  
 To teach a negro at that time—  
 For many say, whatever may come,  
 That ignorance is best for some.  
 He read and told them many things  
 Of gods and men, of priests and kings,

Of brutal wars ; of how the sun  
 Set not until a fight was done ;  
 And how the field of Marathon  
 By valiant Greeks was nobly won.  
 His hearers loved that tale of fame,  
 To please them he'd repeat the same,  
 Hence with them Mara was his name.  
 Then oft with mellow voice he'd sing  
 Some tender song of olden time,  
 'Till tears into their eyes would spring,  
 And send their thoughts off wandering.  
 He felt, alas, that 'mong the rest  
 He was a chattel slave at best—  
 A slave ! Why see, his cheeks are red,  
 With auburn hair upon his head,  
 With ringlets hanging round his brow,  
 His eyes pure kindness did avow,  
 His face intelligent and fair,  
 But marked too soon with lines of care,  
 For might it not be yet his fate,  
 His sale by auction to await,  
 If such necessity was great.  
 His quadroom mother off was sold—  
 Her beauty brought his father gold.  
 He knew not whither she was sent,  
 To find her was his full intent,  
 To seek her and to get her free  
 Was his desire continually.  
 For her he'd freely sacrifice  
 All that this world had to entice—  
 All ? No not all, for there was one,  
 A pure, bright star for him still shone,  
 Like one that from its orbit strayed,  
 As if it came to cheer the earth,  
 The light it brought would never fade—  
 The radiant garment of its birth.  
 And clouds, and gloom, and doubt, and  
 fear,  
 All disappeared when it was near.  
 'Tis said angelic beings can change  
 Their voice and form from time to time,  
 When out on some exploring range,  
 As if to suit each orb and clime  
 Throughout the universe sublime.\*  
 Thus some may leave their native skies,  
 And visit earth in woman's guise,  
 To make this world a paradise.  
 And one to him but lately came,  
 Cleopa was the maiden's name.

'Twas Mara's choice when he could be  
 Alone, to wander by the sea,  
 And watch the coming of the waves  
 As they rushed in ocean caves,  
 Or how the gale with voice of doom

O'er wild waves did command assume,  
 And then some monster billow spur  
 To plunge into its sepulchre.  
 And oft when moonbeams would appear  
 As if to whisper, "Peace, be still,"  
 Like passing seraphs drawing near,  
 Some heavenly mission to fulfil,  
 His heart would feel a wondrous change,  
 The future would appear less black,  
 And hope would have a wider range,  
 It would of happiness bespeak.

While wand'ring thus with thoughtful  
 pace,

One evening when the sun had set,  
 As tender moonbeams took the place  
 Of fading rays of violet,  
 The sea was calm, and out afar  
 Close to the waning horizon,  
 Arose the beauteous evening star  
 As if it wished to shine alone,  
 And all around seemed as if Peace  
 Had come at last to rule and reign  
 And bid oppression ever cease  
 Nor ever curse the world again.  
 And often Mara wished some power  
 Would free the earth from that dread  
 woe—

The servitude which cursed each hour.

He thought thus as he went along,  
 And presently he heard a voice  
 Which soon became a plaintive song—  
 No strain for one who would rejoice,  
 Its pathos quickly touched his heart,  
 Like solemn music in a dream,  
 Sweet sounds of that celestial art—  
 The harmony of heaven 't would seem.

'Twas said that many times before,  
 As Mara had been often told,  
 That Mermaids sang along the shore,  
 Dressing their hair with combs of gold.  
 There was a place which they might  
 haunt,

And now, as not a wave was seen,  
 He thought some sea-nymph came to  
 chant,

Just at the witching hour serene.  
 The song went thus, he listened till  
 The voice grew sad, and faint, and still :

Hail, vesper star, the heavens are red,  
 Thy lovely ray on earth is shed,  
 The day is fled.  
 Now shadows stretch across the deep,  
 And darker hues o'er beauty creep,  
 And flowers weep.

The lingering light and fading gloom

\* See Rev. Dr. Dick.

O'er earth and sky, o'er tower and tomb,  
Is beauty's gloom.  
The deep'ning crimson in the west,  
The hush where slumbering waves find  
rest  
On ocean's breast.

O pensive star, at this sweet hour,  
When beauty slumbers in each flower,  
Thy gentle power  
Would guide each thought to yon blue  
sky,  
To hear with thee, away on high,  
The day's last sigh.

And oft as memory might trace  
Some once loved form, or angel face  
To this dark place,  
Thy holy radiance would appear  
Some blissful spirit hovering near  
A mortal here.

Stupendous power that bade thee shine,  
Fair emblem of that light divine,  
Let it be mine  
Like thee from earth to linger near  
Some luminary like thy sphere,  
Like it appear.\*

The song was o'er, and Mara felt  
As if he were on hallowed ground  
And that some being who ONCE had dwelt  
In some bright home its way had found  
To where he wandered at this hour,  
To touch his heart with magic power.  
He raised his head and saw a face,  
And then a form almost divine,  
Of earth there scarcely seemed a trace,  
He fancied sacred rays did shine,  
Like such as might surround a shrine,  
A beauteous woman at him gaze  
As if she never saw before  
A man whose presence so amazed,  
Or one that she could fancy more—  
This might, of course, be her own thought,  
And then she gently turned her eyes,  
While Mara hers still eager sought,  
And then both looked in rapt surprise,  
As if to look was fresh delight.  
Each felt an impulse to remain—  
'Twas plainly love at the first sight,  
To part they might not meet again.

Tell not of wedded love where gold  
Is but the only link to hold

Each heart to heart. When wealth is gone,  
For which affection has been sold,  
Each then might long to be alone,  
Than live where love was bleak and cold.  
How oft a title wins its way,  
When love without it could not stay.  
Such base and mercenary flame,  
In after years will seldom fail  
To prove such union but the name  
For a vile bargain and a sale,  
A sordid and degrading tie  
Which oft has brought a fatal sigh.

While both thus stood irresolute,  
For Mara could not speak a word,  
She spoke; her voice was like a flute,  
Then he to energy was stirred.  
Words came, they know each other soon,  
And soon became like old, old friends,  
And then beneath the full, bright moon  
That friendship grew which never ends—  
'Twas more than that, 'twas deep, true  
love,

Though neither then avowed the same,  
'Twas that alone with which each strove,  
Though even called some other name.  
Instinctively she yielded trust  
In him who sat beside her now,  
She felt to doubt would be unjust,  
But to sweet destiny would bow.  
For did not his calm face declare  
That there was nought but candor there.  
She had been taught at early age  
To sing and dance, to paint and play,  
She was intended for the stage,  
Her wondrous talent would have sway,  
And wealth for whom she must obey;  
But more than that, her beauty could  
Bring in the mart the highest price  
And catch the rich as beauty would—  
Her charms the wary could entice.  
Cleopa was the favorite name  
Which she was called, all who had read  
Of Cleopatra's wondrous fame,  
The Egyptian queen, for ages dead,  
Whose beauty was the world's acclaim,  
Said Cleopa's was just the same.  
But shame to say, it must be told  
That though with Venus' form and face  
Cleopa could be bought and sold—  
A chattel in the market-place.  
Her blood was tainted by that race,  
Which to belong was oft disgrace.  
And now, alas, here she was brought  
Away from friends she would have near,  
By a rich planter she was bought,  
A dissolute whose foul career  
Was one she had much cause to fear,

\* These verses to the Vesper Star, and two other  
verses, from Mara to Cleopa, were written  
several years ago by the author.

And oft she wandered night by night  
 Alone, bewailing her sad fate,  
 Until by chance, to her delight,  
 She met with one compassionate.  
 To Mara then she told this tale,  
 And he in turn did his narrate,  
 And when they could they would not fail  
 To meet here and anticipate  
 How they might safely plan and shape  
 Their way to freedom—and escape.

When Mara suddenly was hailed,  
 The day when he was out in charge  
 Of his young workers, he ne'er failed  
 To let those children run at large,  
 If there was opportunity.  
 And then he quickly went to see  
 What cause there might be to demand  
 His presence thus so hastily.  
 He wished to show he was at hand,  
 And hurried to the overseer,  
 Who met him partly on the way,  
 With look determined and severe,  
 And said, "There, take this whip and lay  
 It quick and hard on that old wench,  
 She's trying her old game once more,  
 Go lash till her desire you quench  
 For constant loafing—make her roar,  
 I've tried it, 'tis a certain cure."  
 Go now, begin and try your hand,  
 Your action must be quick and sure,  
 Go make them niggers understand  
 That you they also must obey,  
 That while you're under my command  
 They will be closer watched each day,  
 And that you'll do just what I say.  
 Here, take this whip and use it well,  
 And give each lazy nigger—hell."

Mara touched not the whip but went  
 To where the prostrate woman lay.  
 Her falling breath was almost spent,  
 And some around began to pray.  
 With tender care he had her raised,  
 And carried to the nearest shed,  
 By looks his humane act was praised—  
 Water was poured upon her head.  
 Just then the overseer in rushed,  
 He scowled at Mara as he passed,  
 As if his dignity was crushed,  
 He raged like a sirocco blast—

\* NOTE—"No slave dares to be ill or unable to walk, but, when the poor sufferer dies, the master suspects there must have been something wrong inside, and regrets not having liberally applied the usual remedy of burning the belly with a red hot iron."—(Cailles Travels, Vol. II, Page 89.)

"Back niggers, quick, to work off go,  
 I'll manage this extremity."  
 And then to Mara said, "You'll know  
 That when I said go strike the blow,  
 I knew the right true remedy.  
 You disobeyed and left the whip,  
 And nigger like you sneaked away,  
 But I sha'n't let you go or slip—  
 You've got to do just what I say.  
 Here, take this lash and use it now,  
 Go make that scheming nigger rise,  
 Come quick or else there'll be a row,  
 Your bastard back I shall chastise,  
 'Till fellow slaves shall you despise—  
 To me I'll make you humbly bow."  
 He said no more, but raised the lash  
 To strike the feeble woman there,  
 But Mara with a sudden dash  
 Snatched it and tossed it in the air,  
 Which made his raged opponent stare,  
 And o'er his face there came a scowl;  
 He then at Mara aimed a stroke,  
 Which might be deadly as it was foreshadowed,  
 If its great force had not been broke.  
 Then quick he drew a weapon out  
 And Mara saw a pistol aimed  
 Straight at his head, he wheeled about  
 And struck—the overseer fell maimed,  
 Apparently down in a faint—  
 Few thought he'd live to make complaint.  
 But soon he rose, and had he power  
 Mara would die that very hour;  
 Again he sought his pistol true,  
 'Twas gone, but how he never knew,  
 Then he made horrid threats and sneered  
 And cursed until he disappeared.  
 He left—but would a tale relate  
 Of insubordination base,  
 And an excitement would create  
 Enough to seal a plotter's fate.  
 It would be deemed a desperate case  
 To strike planter's overseer,  
 Or his authority resist,  
 Though should relation-his be near  
 The culprit would have cause to fear.  
 Those who owned slaves would all persist  
 In having strict obedience shown.  
 As slaves could nothing ever own,  
 That all their efforts, weak or strong,  
 Would to their owners still belong.  
 Mara knew this, he felt a dread  
 Of what his future fate might be,  
 Vengeance would fall upon his head—  
 His days one bleak, sad misery.

Such was the life slaves mostly led,  
 But from such life one just had fled—

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  
re-t  
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 dwell,  
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

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 alliance 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's 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 fondest 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. 5/1  
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.  
These 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, children, as I have shown, were not permitted to know their own parents. Douglass writes:

"I never saw my mother to know her as much 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 awake 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."

Flew among blossoms, shrubs and trees.  
The mocking bird's soft, sweet, low note  
Was heard upon the air to float,  
And other birds sought this retreat  
As if to list' to sounds more sweet.  
Twas strange; for when Cleopa sung  
Stilled was each other warbler's tongue.  
E'en bloodhounds fierce to her would run  
When she had some soft strain begun.

Whene'er among the slaves she went  
Soon ev'ry head was slowly bent,  
And many thought she was a saint,  
Or creature without human taint—  
One who was sure all hearts to win,  
Who scarcely knew what 'twas to sin,  
And that it was through some device  
She left her home in Paradise,  
To visit earth all hearts to cheer,  
And bring the dawn of freedom near.

Amazing stories oft before  
Were told about the saints of yore,  
Of miracles which all could view—  
Signs, like what Cleopa could do.  
For many readily confessed  
That where she trod the flowers grew best,  
And still with others, much the same,  
That where she sat the sunbeams came ;  
And many others boldly said  
They saw a halo round her head.  
A few declared it was no dream,  
That oft at night she'd sometimes seem  
Bright as a moonbeam on a stream.  
To strengthen this proof they would  
bring  
That at such times the birds would sing.

In estimation of this kind  
Cleopa's wish might ever find  
A crowd of worshippers at hand,  
Ready to act at her command.  
But one of these, still only one,  
Mara, could win her heart alone.

Now as the day began to fade,  
And thoughts of loved ones would pervade,  
Cleopa like a queen sat there  
Inhaling evening's fragrant air.  
And as she watched each parting beam,  
She seemed of happiness to dream,  
Hoping that she would shortly be  
In some fair land where all were free.

Then with a sudden thought she drew  
From out her bosom with a smile  
A letter, it was plain she knew  
From whom it came, it would beguile,  
As would some gentle alchemist,  
It was from Mara, ere she read

Again the welcome words, she kissed  
The written page, but what it said  
Need not be told. There was a verse  
Or two so touching, yet so terse,  
That with them now she would converse—  
These were the words she did rehearse :

"Away with thee I'd gladly fly  
To some fair isle 'neath some blue sky,  
Where day's wild light might chastened be  
Beneath a ro-cate bower for thee,  
Where ev'ry breath that touched thy hair  
Should all the tropic fragrance bear,  
And thou shouldst reign a queen alone,  
Thy love my wealth, my heart thy throne.

How sweet 'twould be at daylight's close  
To watch with thee some slumbering rose,  
When stars looked down with their mild  
light  
To beautify the summer night.  
And see the moon shine on the deep  
When wearied billows seemed to sleep,  
But far more blissful it would be  
To live near thee eternally."

This was signed "Mara," and she  
pres-  
ed  
That name so cherished to her lips,  
Her impulse would have then caressed  
His image—as in fellowships  
Among the pious when they bow  
Before the picture of some saint  
In fond devotion, yet avow  
A pure and sanctified restraint.  
Awhile she dwelt in this rapt mood  
Then raised her eyes—there Mara stood !

He came not near, his face foretold  
The trouble which he just had met,  
Yet he looked confident and bold,  
Evincing not the least regret  
That he defied the overseer  
And humbled him within an hour,  
And met his threats without a fear,  
And also scorned his boasted power,  
But he knew well that that vile man  
Would soon invent some odious tale,  
Or quick adopt some evil plan  
Which with the planter might prevail  
To make him strongly now suspect  
That Mara was false to his trust,  
An ingrate whom he would detect,  
And to his owner most unjust.

Then to Cleopa's patron run,  
To say she was a false coquet,  
That though his confidence she won,  
With Mara near she'd that forget,

That all the kindness he had shown  
Was so much kindness thrown away,  
That her ingratitude was known  
While she was flirting day by day,  
And false in every part she'd play.

A jealous man is often moved  
To credit what may be untrue,  
And hate the one he once beloved,  
As if no constancy she knew.

Cleopa's patron might be told  
Some act of hers to rouse his ire,  
Making his anger fierce and bold—  
Revenge would then be his desire,  
And then to be within his power,  
Might subject her to such disgrace,  
And bring destruction in an hour,  
And every sign of hope efface.

All this did Mara represent,  
His energetic words were few,  
"The overseer on mischief bent  
Would bring a curse on me and you,  
I know the villain's bad intent,  
I've long suspected his dislike,  
He's ready now a blow to strike.  
And you especially he'd bring  
Down to degraded suffering.  
No safety now for us but flight,  
We must leave here this very night."

As planters seldom favored school's,  
But wished their negroes still to be  
Brought up as ignorant as fools,  
Scarce knowing even A B C,  
If by rare chance one learned to read  
He would be held a dangerous man,  
Particularly if he made speed  
To learn much when he once began,  
He might infect the colored race,  
Knowledge would ignorance replace,  
Slaves, though in bonds to men more wise,  
Might come to think such bonds disgrace,  
And might against their owners rise.

But planters, mostly pious men,  
At least called holy in a way,  
For they could either swear or pray  
Be the occasion what it may,  
Would have slaves taught by pious rule,  
And packed to church instead of school.

Preachers, no doubt with best intent,  
Would tell them all to be content  
With their low station, and obey  
Their masters' rule from day to day,  
This was the scriptural right way.  
If even chastised without being wrong  
In heaven they'd sing their triumph song,  
But here 'twas plainly God's decree

That some should in subjection be.\*

A local preacher at that time,  
Well known to all as "Noble Ben,"  
Whose grey head fostered thoughts  
sublime,

Who warned quite fearlessly all men,  
Masters and servants, both alike,  
For freedom evermore to strike,  
Freedom of thought, the mind to charm,  
Freedom to act, but not to harm,  
For freedom boldly speak the truth,  
Though cowards would this point dispute,  
Freedom to doubt and then to see  
Truth bursting from each mystery.  
He was a negro, black as night,  
With spectacles to aid his sight,  
And sentiments supremely bright.  
A favorite great save with a few  
Who knew not half of what he knew.  
Such thought him traitor in disguise,  
Who rule and law would both despise;  
His independence did surprise.  
He was a preacher and had won  
His freedom by a daring act,  
He saved his master's only son  
From being drowned—a well-known fact  
The boy sailed out, his boat upset  
One stormy day when waves were high,  
To shore he never more could get  
If Noble Ben had not been nigh,  
He heard the boy's repeated cry,  
And though some others stood around,  
To risk great danger none were found,  
But Preacher Ben, by nature brave,  
Rushed in to battle with each wave  
And a poor fellow creature save.  
Then soon he clutched the drowning boy,  
And brought him out mid shouts of joy.  
Ben's master saw the noble deed—  
His son was saved, and Ben was freed,  
Among Ben's friends he took the lead.

This brave old man would brook no  
wrong  
From rich or poor, from weak or strong,  
And slavery he'd boldly tell  
Was first derived and hatched in hell,  
White preachers came with serious look

\* The Rev. Bishop Meade in addressing a congregation of slaves said:

(1) "Now when correction is given you either deserve it or you do not deserve it. But whether you really deserve it or not it is your duty, and Almighty God requires that you bear it patiently.

(2) "Your masters and your mistresses are God's overseers, and if you are faulty towards them God Himself will punish you for it in the next world."



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  
 Bear-teous 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 set 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.\*

He 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 425.

\* 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."

Welcome to share the early meal.  
 And then the guide told all he knew  
 Of what the strangers wished to do.  
 Mara and Cleopa stood there  
 They had been travelling all night,  
 They came for Ben's advice and care  
 And aid to help them in their flight,  
 A task in which he'd take delight.  
 They now were wearied and must rest  
 While what to do he would plan best,  
 Here for some hours they'd be secure,  
 Their safety many would assure,  
 For when the sun again went down  
 He'd lead them on to Norfolk town  
 There he had friends who knew the way  
 To private haunts on Chesapeake Bay.

'Twas evening and with hurried breath  
 A dusky messenger was seen  
 Run on, as if he fled from death,  
 Along a shaded lane of green,  
 And soon before the master's house.  
 Whose wide verandah cast a shade,  
 'Neath which was many a wild carouse  
 When planters met to talk or trade,  
 Or even a game for negroes played.\*

He stopped and held out in his hand  
 A message from the overseer,  
 Quick as the master read the note  
 He startled all who then were near  
 By yelling out a furious oath—  
 "Ha, ha, my dame, so you have left,"  
 He cried aloud, "I'll have you back  
 And then my prude I'll make you wed  
 The ugliest negro in my pack.  
 Sleek Mara was her dainty choice,  
 He shall be groomsman and rejoice,  
 We'll run them down without delay,  
 Forthwith we'll hunt them night and day,  
 A lively time to bring them here,  
 The hounds will find them far or near,  
 And Mara's owner too shall be  
 Included in our company.

I am the owner of a hundred slaves,  
 They are my chattels, legally my own,  
 He who disputes my right but only raves  
 Against God's laws, his mandate and His  
 throne,

The church of which I am a member holds  
 That slavery is right, divinely made,  
 And he who 'gainst that institution scolds  
 Knows not that God has authorized that  
 trade.†

His book in many places still ordains  
 That some men must be slaves, and  
 women too,

Their children also who with tender pains  
 They've nourished just as other mothers  
 do,

I am the owner of a crowd of such,  
 I own their bodies and their mental  
 powers,

And I can pet or punish just as much  
 As my forbearance fits or anger sours.  
 But lately vile intruders have been near,  
 In this old state few dare to show a face,  
 Raiders from Canada who say that here  
 Virginian slavery is a disgrace.  
 Our Southern planters one and all defy  
 The sympathising thieves who look so sly,  
 When they come here to steal our property  
 Those British hypocrites affect delight  
 In freeing slaves who are much better fed  
 Than their own homeless pauper thousand  
 white,

Who plead so piteously for work or bread:  
 With scarce a place at night to lay their  
 head.

Let them construct their underground  
 railway,

But if they send their man-traps to this  
 land

They will commence a game where two  
 can play.

When they before our trusty rifles stand,  
 I own these slaves, I stand upon my rights,  
 And he who tries to steal one dies or  
 fights.

Now we shall start the fugitives to seek,  
 They shall be here in bonds within a week,  
 Mara and Cleopa shall feel quite meek.

\* Said to have taken place.

† It is well known that at times during the existence of slavery in the United States, the preachers and members of the Northern and Southern churches had many bitter disputes regarding the attitude of Christians towards slavery. While Northern preachers frequently denounced the slave trade, the Southern churches were vehement in its support. Yet strange to say, many of the Northern preachers were, for peculiar reasons, willing at times to connive at slavery.

The Rev. James Smylie, M.A., of Mississippi, said: "If slavery be a sin and advertising and apprehending slaves, with a view to restore them to their owners, is a direct violation of the divine law, and if the buying, selling or holding of a slave for the sake of gain is a hideous sin and scandal, then verily three fourths of all the Episcopalians, Methodists, Baptists and Presbyterians in eleven states of the union are of the devil."—The Quarterly Christian Spectator, 1838, page 25.

The Rev. Mr. Crawford said: "Slavery is not only countenanced, permitted and regulated by the Bible, but it was positively instituted by God himself."

These extracts are given to show how deeply rooted in the minds of almost every class in the Southern States was the idea that slavery was right.

This man a planter was an elder too,  
 Great in the church and held its doctrines  
 true,  
 Who kept the good things of this world in  
 view,  
 He owned a hundred slaves and longed  
 for more  
 And might do strange things to increase  
 his store.  
 He counted his broad acres by the mile,  
 And would boast of them with a graceful  
 smile.  
 He little cared for praise, or blame or  
 taunt,  
 The more he got the more he seemed to  
 want,  
 In church most powerful in his gift of  
 prayer,  
 And still more powerful when he chose to  
 swear.  
 At times to heaven he'd turn his pious  
 eyes,  
 As if the things of earth he did despise  
 To cheer a visitor he'd find a pack  
 And play at "euchre," or at "high-low-  
 jack,"  
 He had a weakness too for good old rye,  
 And oft dispensed it while he winked his  
 eye,  
 Yet there were planters of a different  
 mind,  
 Who to their slaves and servants were  
 most kind.  
 He now was getting ready for a chase.  
 To bring Cleopa back to her old place,  
 And Mara to his owner should be sent,  
 He boasted loud that such was his intent,  
 And thus this planter on a chase was bent.

'Twas midnight and the moon was clear,  
 The waves on Chesapeake were bright,  
 So also on James River near,  
 So too on Hampton Roads in sight,  
 And south of these that marsh so vast,  
 The Dismal Swamp, looked as if death  
 His gloomy shadow here had cast  
 To rob all living things of breath.  
 Yet all the reptiles that were hid  
 Within its noxious mud and seum,  
 Though dangerous, could never rid  
 The slave of hope of joys to come.  
 But if the bloodhounds savage yell  
 Was heard with shouting hunters near,  
 The trembling fugitive might well  
 Let hopes of rescue disappear.  
 The gloomy swamp looked dark and drear  
 And never more than on this night.

Though moonbeams flitted here and there,  
 Like pitying angels in their flight,  
 All showed how lone that place could be,  
 Yet oft it was the spot from where  
 Poor harrassed men who would be free  
 Took their first step for liberty.  
 Here Mara, Cleopa and Ben  
 Had got thus far from hostile men.  
 They had been resting here for hours  
 In their escape from evil powers,  
 And now they must start on their way  
 To reach the entrance of the bay  
 Before the dawning of the day.  
 Then, ere they left, in prayer they knelt,  
 And Noble Ben spoke as he felt.  
 He asked the Lord to be their guide  
 And shelter from their foes provide,  
 Though in night's gloom they made a start,  
 Each left the swamp with lightsome  
 heart.

Chaste was the dawn, its modest blush  
 was seen  
 Stealing with dewy mist o'er land and sea,  
 The fragrant air was balmy and serene,  
 A perfumed fountain of all purity.  
 The shades that hovered round the wings  
 of night  
 Fled one by one away ere morn's first  
 gleam,  
 Then faintly came the soft and struggling  
 light,  
 Like radiance wak'ning from a transient  
 dream,  
 And as some lingering star seen yet on  
 high  
 Reluctant seemed to dim and fade away,  
 Some zephyr came, as if its parting sigh,  
 The star soon disappeared and lo! 'twas  
 day.

And now behold the distant mountain  
 crowned  
 With the red glory of the sun's first beam,  
 While greeting flowers seem springing up  
 around  
 To lend their beauty to the peaceful scene.  
 The ocean vast now grander in repose  
 Than when its towering waves would  
 touch the sky  
 Seems like eternity where human woes  
 Are lost and hushed with sorrow's latest  
 sigh,  
 Aerial warblers greet the early rays,  
 Which flash o'er hill and vale, o'er tower  
 and tree,  
 And man awakes to gaze in wrapt amaze,

Like one enchanted by some mystery,  
And views a glowing world with ecstasy.

'Twas sunrise on the Potomac,  
Its waters never shown more bright,  
Except where shaded almost black,  
Close where the banks reached their full  
height,

The river looked a stream of light,  
And onward went, as if to seek  
A union with the Chesapeake,  
And hide within that shining bay  
Before another closing day.  
The sea-birds flew with dripping wing  
From isle to isle of floating foam,  
And touched at each as if to bring  
Some liquid pearl to its near home.  
Already in the early day  
The swallow flitted as of yore,  
To seek and find its insect prey  
Midway between each misty shore.  
And sailing through the air o'erhead  
The hawk's dread pinions were outspread  
To seize upon some fleeing bird  
Ere far from its lone nest it retired.  
Yet nature seemed in peaceful mood,  
No frown upon its face was seen,  
The calm, the quiet of solitude  
Made earth look blissful and serene.  
The Blue Ridge heights now seen afar,  
On which tall trees now seemed to wave  
Adieu to the bright morning star,  
Looked glorious in the flush they gave,  
And sea, and sky, and flower and tree,  
And forests welcoming the birds,  
And mountains in their majesty  
Seemed listening to angelic words,  
While peace with beauty in its train,  
As if forever to remain,  
Came back from heaven to earth again  
To have a glorious tranquil reign  
And blot out every earthly stain.

But hark! there comes a sudden sound,  
Startling the silence at this hour,  
While echoes loud are heard around  
With seeming aggravated power.  
'Tis the loud thunder of a gun,  
And now is seen a cloud of smoke  
As if to greet the rising sun,  
Ere wearied toilers have awoke  
The startled birds are seen on high,  
Fluttering wildly here and there,  
Like scattered leaves along the sky,  
Eager some danger to beware.  
The eagle pauses in his flight  
Ready to seek some safe retreat,

And feeding herds almost affright,  
Rush off some lonely path to beat.

A shout is heard from the far shore,  
Though faint at first, it grows aloud,  
Shout after shout just as before,  
As if to reach some distant cloud.  
Then stillness comes, but soon again  
A loud report is heard away,  
Another gun with deep refrain  
Salutes the mountains and the day.  
Oft at this hour the hunter's shot  
Will startle up the timid game,  
But seldom to this lonely spot  
The practiced sportsman ever came.  
Why is it now, ere morning beams  
Have scarce lit on the distant hills  
That shots and shouts and savage screams  
Disturb the air in piercing thrills?  
While some poor fugitive who longs  
For liberty with beating heart  
Forgets his courage and the songs  
Which urged he should for freedom start,  
Dreading the blood-hounds' savage part.

Another shot, another shout,  
While bellowing hounds run quick about,  
A boat appears now coming out,  
It leaves the dim and misty shore  
Urged onward by an active oar,  
A negro rows and pulls with might,  
A woman steers the boat aright,  
And partly hidden near the bow  
A crouching man is lying low,  
He got a wound but not severe,  
He speaks, his words are those to cheer,  
"Pull on old friend, we'll soon be clear"—  
Another shot, it touched the cheek  
Of her who steered, she did not speak,  
But paddled faster than before,  
They soon would reach the other shore  
A point was turned in their fast flight,  
They now were safely out of sight,  
And then a cloud of fog arose  
Which hid them from their vicious foes.  
Thus oft may darkness make the way  
Far safer than the light of day.

Now, God be praised, cried Noble Ben,  
We've got here safe from wicked men,  
Not far away we shall find friends,  
On them our safety much depends,  
Those who pursue scarce know the way  
That we shall take by night or day,  
While they may wander far astray.  
They left the boat and stood on land,  
At first Cleopa could scarcely stand,  
She had escaped a murderer's shot,

Which almost sad disaster brought,  
 And Mara's wounded arm could show  
 How nearly fatal was the blow,  
 Yet they had courage still to face  
 All danger to escape disgrace.  
 The boat at once was sent adrift,  
 They could without it further shift,  
 It might mislead if it was found  
 By those in chase, to think all drowned.  
 Ben led the way and soon they came  
 Mong friends whose service he could  
 claim,  
 Here they could rest till night grew dark,  
 Then northward move and none remark.

Ten days and nights had nearly sped  
 Since from their last retreat they fled.  
 They found true friends along the road  
 Who help in many ways bestowed,  
 Most of their lone way they could ride  
 With watchful guardians near their side,  
 And strange to say, no foe came near  
 With their escape to interfere.  
 Mara grew hopeful on the route,  
 While Cleopa oft seemed to doubt,  
 But Ben's reliance was devout.

'Twas morn again, but one of gloom,  
 Freight with destiny or doom,  
 Niagara Falls were now in sight,  
 Which thousands gaze at with delight.  
 While closer to them they drew near,  
 No rainbow o'er them did appear  
 To bid the fugitives good cheer.  
 The cataract with solemn sound  
 Hushed every song of birds around,  
 The lovers now stood hand in hand  
 In fond gaze at the promised land;  
 Beneath the rapid river ran,  
 Which, when crossed, made the slave a  
 man.

Ben cried, "That's Canada you see,  
 Once touch that soil and you are free,  
 And there, behold that grand old flag,  
 Briton's of it may proudly brag,  
 Though now it droops in clouded skies  
 There's no oppression where it flies.  
 Great Britain did a deed of fame  
 When freedom she did loud proclaim,  
 And paid to set free every slave  
 Where'er the red cross flag could wave  
 In its dominions far or near  
 It dried up many a mother's tear.\*

No woman forced with heavy heart  
 With husband or with child to part,  
 Here, though all shout for liberty,  
 What means that shout for you or me?

Our hearts are chilled, we stand in awe  
 Of the vile, fugitive slave law,  
 Though hundreds here would be our  
 friends,

That law the slave owner defends,  
 If Southern planters here can track  
 A runaway; he'll take him back.  
 And Northern laws can't interfere  
 With planters, who are most severe."  
 Cleopa heard what was just said,  
 And of her owner had a dread.  
 She knew he was a dangerous man,  
 Who, in vile plots, would lead the van.  
 She almost thought there was some  
 scheme

To seize them ere they crossed the stream,  
 'Twas plain to see she felt oppressed,  
 And thus her two friends she addressed:

"O Mara, partner of my heart,  
 What would life be were we to part,  
 The brightest sun would not give light  
 If thou wert absent from my sight,  
 All would be gloom by night or day  
 If thou from me wert far away.  
 And this I feel I should avow  
 As strange forebodings press me now.  
 And hear me trusty Noble Ben,  
 Faithful among the sons of men,  
 You have been a true friend in need,  
 In every word and every deed,  
 Your kindness and your constant care  
 Has kept us off from dark despair."

The old man sat as if he mused,  
 His eyes with tears were now suffused,  
 "Fo' God," he said, "I'd rather die  
 Than you should ever hopeless sigh,  
 Be not cast down, our friends will bring  
 A rescue from this suffering.  
 They'll send a boat by close of day  
 To take us from this land away.  
 We'll cross Niagara's whirling stream  
 Ere the moon spreads its early beam."

Now Mara spoke, he sat beside  
 Cleopa, his intended bride:  
 "Soul of my life be of good cheer,  
 Behold the promised land quite near.  
 Speak not of parting, soon we'll be  
 Beyond all danger and be free."

\* No more magnanimous act was ever performed by any nation in ancient or modern times than that of Great Britain when she voluntarily paid ONE HUNDRED MILLION DOLLARS to the slave owners in her West India colonies, to have every slave therein made forever free. This grand act of manumission is one of the greatest and most beneficent national deeds ever recorded in history.

We'll journey side by side till death,  
Bids the pulse cease with our last breath,  
How light will seem the cares of life  
If we together share its strife.  
Its greatest task shall seem no more  
Than seeking shells on the sea shore,  
Though waves may rush around our feet.  
Their force together we shall meet.  
Though bright or dim, in calm or storm,  
Faithful each duty we'll perform  
And thus a placid life be spent  
While simple wants shall bring content."

'Twas close of day and near the hour  
When they might 'scape the tyrant's  
power,

A boat was slowly seen to cross,  
Holding its course without much loss,  
At least it kept its steady way  
From the Canadian shore which lay  
'Cross to the other landing bay.  
Down near the shore there two men stood,  
Whose actions seemed to bode no good.  
Mara and his friends were near,  
And watched their movements without  
fear.

Before the boat had touched the strand  
A stranger gave a loud command.  
"Halt, fugitives, you're not yet free,  
You've got to deal just here with me."  
All stared, and great was their surprise,  
There stood the planter in disguise.  
He followed them from day to day,  
And guessed their course would mostly  
lay

Along the underground railway.\*

He had a bailiff near at hand  
ready to act at his command,  
And now, forthwith to make arrest,  
He drew a warrant from his breast.  
The planter said, "Here, seize for me  
This dame, she is my property,  
This fellow, Mara, you can hold,  
His owner wants him quickly sold,  
And this free nigger, called old Ben,  
We'll clap him in the nearest pen.  
All law and gospel he defies,  
And helps each fugitive that flies."  
Poor Cleopa could scarcely stand  
When the rude bailiff seized her hand,  
But Mara quickly burst his grip,  
Though threatened with a club or whip,

And now the planter he addressed :  
"Vile wretch with infamy possessed,  
Without a single mark or trace  
Of human feeling in your face,  
Dare breathe on her your poisonous breath,  
Touch her and you will meet your death ;  
Attempt your threat and you and I  
Shall test who shall be first to die."  
The planter cried, "Ha, bravely spoke,  
Yet you shall see this is no joke.  
I've other bailiffs here beside,  
We'll quickly crush your upstart pride,  
Here, men, come on, this hero seize  
Ere he again our fate decrees."

The empty boat lay on the shore,  
Mara sprung in and seized an oar  
Quick Cleopa was at his side,  
Ben entered, and the rushing tide  
Would soon have sent the boat away  
Far down the rapids in the spray.  
Were it not the planter now *that*  
And bailiff firmly held the bow,  
To keep the boat from running out  
While they for help began to shout.  
The other bailiffs heard the cry,  
And down the steep were drawing nigh.  
Mara determined to be free  
Cried, "Die Cleopa's enemy."  
Then with a furious deadly stroke  
Struck down the planter, but he broke  
The only oar that was at hand  
To safely bring the boat to land—  
Disaster met the little band,  
Out they had swung in the wild stream,  
From either shore was heard a scream,  
For many saw they were adrift,  
And to escape could make no shift.  
From side to side the whirling boat  
Was tossed on high and scarce could float,  
No effort of its helpless crew  
Could stay destruction then in view ;  
They seemed as if prepared for fate,  
And calmly the event await.  
They tried to steer, though wildly tossed,  
But felt as if forever lost.  
The furious current nought could stand,  
They were seen bowing hand in hand,  
As if to greet the spirit land.  
Each fated one with placid face  
Saw death approach with rapid pace,  
Then by an eddy they were swept,  
When naught their doom could intercept,  
'Mong maddened surges rushing high,  
With deafening roar towards the sky.  
Then onward still they wildly rushed  
Until their fragile boat was crushed,

\* The term, "Underground Railway," was given during the slavery period in the United States, to the method adopted by sympathizers with fugitive slaves to aid their escape from the United States to Canada.

And as the whirlpool vast was neared  
The boat and crew had disappeared.\*

Then from the shores on either side,  
Across the gulf so wild and wide,  
Many gave tokens of their grief  
When powerless to give relief  
To those who suddenly were doomed,  
And in the whirlpool entombed.

'Twas said the moon and stars that  
night

Looked down upon the scene of woe  
With a pale melancholy light—  
The pity they would fain bestow,  
Flow'rs looked as if they wished to fade  
Or pine within some gloomy shade;  
And scarce a song was heard next day,  
As if the birds had flown away  
From where poor dead Cleopa lay,  
Perhaps near by where Mara slept  
In death's last grasp, they might have  
kept

Together and their last tears wept  
Close to where faithful Noble Ben  
Said his last prayer and last amen.  
'Twas also said that for some days  
The sun shed but his feeblest rays  
Around the whirlpool's circling ring,  
Where shadows then seemed wandering,  
And oft though sympathizing friends  
Made many a search along the shore  
Still nought was found but grief that sends  
A deeper sorrow than before,  
The loss still greater to deplore  
For those who would be seen no more.

Years have since passed and summer  
days

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\* It is said that many years ago a terrible accident of the kind occurred near the same place on the Niagara River.

With summer's sunset golden rays,  
Still bring fresh visitors to view  
The scenes which here seem ever new,  
The falls, and foam, and sunlit sky,  
The rainbow mostly ever nigh,  
The moon's soft light as it looks down  
Where cliffs upon the river frown,  
These sights the stranger's heart may  
cheer,

Yet oft as they may chance to hear  
Of that sad dire disastrous day  
Where three brave lives were cast away,  
A mournful tribute oft they pay.

The beautiful Cleopa's fate  
Will grief in many a heart create,  
And Mara's sad untimely end  
Will bring a sigh from many a friend,  
These, with poor Ben's unhappy doom,  
Around the place will cast a gloom,  
To some as dismal as the tomb.

No matter where those three friends  
take  
Their last long sleep or deep repose  
In river or Ontario's lake,  
They now are free from human woes,  
Rather no doubt than be a slave  
Each would prefer to part with life,  
And rest in peace within the grave,  
Free from all sorrow, care and strife.  
The face may often wear a smile,  
But the crushed heart can ne'er beguile,  
Yet sad to think when almost free  
Came sudden their calamity.

No piteous tale of post's pen  
Could more have touched the hearts of  
men,  
And oft made tender women weep  
For those who 'neath those waters sleep,  
Niagara's river dark and deep.

