

SLAVERY:

A POEM

“I would not have a slave to till my ground –
To carry me, to fan me while I sleep –
For all the wealth that sinews bought and sold
Have ever earned.” – COWPER

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[unnumbered page 3]

POEM.

I.

Muses, awake, while the fresh morning shines,
And view your cities in the land of vines,
For time has stripped them of their summer's
 glow,
And turned their pleasures to a scene of woe. [5]
Their martial pomp is sinking in decay,
And marble temples moldering away;
Their silvery fountains, streaming into spires,
Are marshes now, and overgrown with briers,
The banquet long hath ceased within their halls, [10]
And foreign arms have broken down their walls;
The sacred fire has ceased to glitter there,
And faithful priest to offer up a prayer;
Their mighty men will plead for arms no more, [15]
Nor praise their heroes when the war is o'er.
 The Bards, alas! 'tis worthy to complain,
Have sung their last but never dying strain;
With all the rest have met th' untimely doom,
And traced their journey through the dismal
 gloom, [20]
With Orphean steps, beguiled from every fear,
While Shades entranced with music hover near,

[page 4]

Till, borne beyond the fatal river's shore,
They leave the heavenly Muse forever more.
How lonely now the desert world appears! [25]
A city razed beneath the march of years,
A stately palace into ashes burned;
A Hall of music by the winds o'er-turned!
The Poets gone! their memory fades away,
And wisdom weeps, but can no longer stay; [30]
Then here review the oft reviving cause,
Whence the dark ages come by Heavens laws,
The happiest state mankind has ever known,
Was when he lived contented with his own,
And ne'er aspired to rule his weaker friends, [35]
Watched his own acts, and always made amends.
Then bloody Mars his banner ne'er displayed,
And courts of justice never had been made,
And wrapt in doubt they watched the starry
clime: [40]
Imagination strode the wings of time,
Which, borne to Heaven, no favor ever shows
On earth-born evil, or her children's woes;
But when their fancy left the heavenly sphere,
To always gaze on things that rested near, [45]
The love of self, that serpent, stole along,
And scattered poison 'mid the happy throng.
Contention then, and madness soon ensued,
And maniac hatred fired many a feud,
Till secret plots in the dark night were laid, [50]
The trumpet shrieked, and burst the ambushade;
The neighing war-horse bore remorseless man,
And reckless fury filled the fatal van.
Tumultuous scenes then "filled the spacious
earth" [55]

[page 5]

And man was prized by what his toil was worth,
For those subjected served the prouder part –
Oppression even conquered noble Art!

Then pale distress, and want, and sickly grief,
In vain appealing for a kind relief, [60]

Involved the world in deep and hopeless gloom,
Till Heaven frowned and spoke their final doom;
And every virtue from the hand of God,
Was swept away by sin's destroying flood.

'Tis thus that nations young and virtuous rise, [65]
While signs propitious fill the cheerful skies;

But sinful pride and death-enamored lust
Sweep every fabric to its native dust;
For, so 'tis planned that nature's laws produce
A compensation worthy their abuse. [70]

II.

O, wandering friends, on this the stranger's
shore,
Let fancy waft you the creation o'er;
In either clime to catch a hasty view
Of ancient causes and of nations new; [75]
Nor linger long, for all must hurry here,
Or mad advancement leaves them in the rear.

When Wisdom left the cruel world for Heaven,
To servile chains by Eastern nations driven,
And the pale sun might well have hid his face – [80]
Ashamed to view the wreck of human race –

The lovely fields on India's fertile shore,
Month after month were steeped in livid gore,
Till Freedom's murderers sickened at the sight,
And Death, pale monster, grinned with less de- [85]
light.

While Desolation scattered wild alarms,
And savage chieftains brandished equal arms,
Love, bride of Wisdom, wept at human woe,
And, both together, sought the world below, [90]
Where grim Destruction, red with recent fight,
Parent of Grief, the son of Storms and Night,
Still grasped the helm, contending every hour,
While each dispute revived his dying power.

‘Twas through those scenes of tumult, rash [95]
and vain,

That Wisdom slowly, calmly sought the plain,
To view contending armies full enrolled,
In spheres of vengeance, crimes, and love of gold;
Each, rife with madness, burning to destroy – [100]
The friends of grief and enemies of joy.

One look! alone, unknown and unadmired,
To distant vales the friends of peace retired,
And dwelt in forests where the mountains rise,
Around whose base the lofty lightening flies, [105]
And left forever those of scarlet crimes,
For milder people and more western climes.

Of those who found on India’s bloody shore,
The vilest conquered and the weak gave o’er,
In slavish chains to end their bated breath, [110]
Or rise to slaughter and more sudden death,
Rehearsing scenes of torture and despair,
Till heaven should chain the fiends that gov-
erned *there*.

How prone to evil, misery and woe, [115]
With iron hearts, are mortals here below!
Things of most value are the lowest prized;
The noblest foresight is the most despised;
The strictest virtue crosses keen desire,

[page 7]

And indignation lights revengeful fire; [120]
Yet those must prologue the infernal stage,
Whose tragics lay in Slavery's iron age.
Art, science, knowledge, virtue and the rest,
From the earliest times have made their journey
West, [125]
And when from India many a State was past,
In Egypt long their happy lot was cast.
Then cities arose, with temples, walls and towers,
And fountains sparkled 'mid celestial bowers;
Then broad canals were formed to other lands, [130]
And lofty vessels studded all the strand;
Their arts were sent to many a distant coast,
And wide-spread knowledge was their proudest
boast –
As when the herald of some victory won, [135]
That tells the tale of foreign lands undone –
Proclaims the news, the shouts of joy arise,
And far away the boastful rumor flies –
So spread their influence over moor and high- [140]
land,
Till bondage fled from all that happy island.
Another age, the kingdom shifted hands,
And heavy taxes trammelled all the land,
Till hungry avarice forged oppressive chains,
And Freedom fled to other western plains. [145]
Each after age an equal cycle drew,
Till Greece was lost and Roman splendor grew,
Nor even then, from all examples past,
Could Romans see that they must fall at last;
But traced precisely sin's bewitching track, [150]
Sporting with Freedom on the fatal rack,
Till Gothic vengeance swept their sunny shore,

And proud distinctions flourished *there* no more.
Still to the west Apollo's journey lay,
Who scattered many a blessing on his way, [155]
Supplied instruction to the listening mind,
And marked the fate of nations left behind.
From civil wars the Goth began to cease,
The neighboring nations learned the arts of
peace, [160]
And lonely Britain with her sister isle,
Woke to new life with a prophetic smile:
For soon advanced a lowly son of pride,
And sought Britannia for his virgin bride,
From whom derived the Anglo-Saxon name, [165]
Has filled the wide creation with its fame.
A thousand cities now are joined as one,
And ruled with pomp by Britain's haughty son,
Whose myriad servants bend the humble knee,
And countless vessels plow the boundless sea. [170]
While lean Ambition bears aloft her fame,
And spreads her powers as when a raging flame,
In sultry times, proceeds with savage force,
Increased by all encountered in its course,
Involving forests, cities, hill and moor, [175]
And hurls her torch to the neighboring shore.
Another world from ocean's boundless maze,
Looms up before mankind's astonished gaze!
Wild was that land, by savage tribes possessed,
Where the gray eagle built her lonely nest, [180]
And savage war-fires, glittering through the
skies,
Were beacons then, where cities now arise.
Through thickets there the shaggy hunters stray'd,
The corn was tended by each half-clad maid, [185]

And when their barbarous wars were briefly o'er,
They smoked the peace-pipe at the wigwam door.
No higher pleasure could their minds embrace,
For Slavery's fang had poisoned all the race.

The course pursued on England's every shore, [190]
Was, raise the rich and trample down the poor;
Their actions taught that none were fit for
heaven,

Except a few to whom the right was *given*;
And every doubt that stronger minds expressed, [195]
With knotted silence or the rack was "blessed,"
Till torture's victim chose the sailors toil,
And spread their canvas for Columbia's soil;
Where men untainted hastened to repair,
But "Satan also came" to meet them there. [200]

Through many years th' uneven tide of life
Was tossed with tempests, and with savage strife,
But just success established civil right,
And future prospects shone with radiant light.
Now emigration's ever fluttering sail, [205]
O'er the gray sea advanced before the gale;
One sail at first, then others pressed the rear,
As oft the wild-birds at the close of year,
To freer regions in a warmer land.

They built them homes, and each extended [210]
field
Bore the luxuriance of a golden yield,
While thousands more, the Lion's future prey,
O'er the wild ocean took their lonely way.
Meantime Oppression's more than jealous pride [215]
Transported ruin o'er the briny tide,
To lull suspicion and their souls decoy,

To please their avarice and at last destroy;
To fill the land with trouble and dismay,
Till love of freedom should have passed away. [220]

The ruin brought was bound with Afric's race,
The bond was slavery and the sphere disgrace,
For every servant that was bought and sold
Increased the drunken hankering after gold.

Here at the *source*, division first began, [225]
A few contended for the rights of man,
Declared that slavery was the code of crimes,
That ruined nations in all former times;
And wisely saw, should slavery prevail,
That every hope for liberty would fail. [230]

Others, alas! whom wealth alone could please,
Or strangely sought it in pursuit of ease!
With zeal commenced "*the trade*" in stolen men,
And freed the slaver to return again.

Now o'er the sea by changing tempests blown, [235]
The "*dealer*" hastens through a course unknown,
And lands at last at Slavery's *vital* mart,
And seeks the Chieftain with a "manly heart,"

Who tramples oft the ruined virgin's grave,
And human skulls his sleeping chamber paves;* [240]
Arched o'er with bones, confined with muscly
bands—

The windows strung with jaws and severed hands!
Yet there were nations in that sunny clime,
That long escaped the evils of their time — [245]
That lived contented with their humble fare,

* Dahomey — the people are peculiarly ferocious. The king's bedchamber is paved with skulls and the roofs ornamented with the jawbones of chiefs whom he has slain in battle. — *Woodbridge's Geography*,

Retired, and happy with domestic care;
Peace was their pride, where sorrow seldom came—
They ne'er had heard the charming monster
 Fame; [250]
No fear of danger ever marred their rest—
A harmless people, and "with plenty blessed."
 'Twas night. The color fled from Nature's face,
And slumber held her in a soft embrace;
The rosy smile that parting day displayed, [255]
Was lost in deep and far-extended shade.
No sound was heard save the wild forest's roar,
Like moaning waters on a lonely shore.
But hark! those yells! those shrieks and frantic
 cries! [260]
The burning town now streaks the livid skies!
The fleeing victims, madly seized, are bound,
And wild despair re-echos all around!
 'Twas but a prelude, brief, nor more severe,
Than scenes that each must witness every year, [265]
Driven far onward—sold beyond the sea—
With shackles bound, and never to be free;
And when the chains were fastened on their
 feet,
And pirates dragged them from that loved re- [270]
 treat,
Both joy and hope withdrew their cheering light,
And left them weeping in eternal night.
He sees no more his children round him play,
For, on the billows he is borne away, [275]
And she no more her infant smile serene,
For that was roasted as an "opening scene."
But night and day their prison mounts the waves,
And wafts them onward to the land of slaves.

III.

Thus sprung from Lerna, nursed by Itian crimes, [280]
Till its broad folds encircled distant climes,
The scaly monster grew, by law revered,
Nor was its poison by the nations feared,
Until, at last, dissensions rose to view,
And Britain learned what younger nations knew, [285]
That love of rule impels the sordid mind
To hate oppressors worst of all mankind.
Disputes advanced—oppression raised her hand,
And indignation filled the excited land,
Till North and South united in the cause, [290]
To sweep from earth those heaven-rejected laws.
Thou, free-born city, who didst dare alone,
In simple guise—armed with a single stone—
To face the imperial giant! Lo! he lies
In humble dust—his honor is thy prize. [295]
Yea, noble Boston, thou hast freed this land
From Naemae's lion, and thy busy hand,
At every turn in mighty works employed—
Corruption cleansed, and monsters' power de-
stroyed— [300]
Thy fame, Herculean, in the stars shall glow,
When two more labors free the land from woe.
Nor thee alone shall all mankind admire,
Though thou alone didst kindle Freedom's fire;
For seven dark years, in dangers passed away, [305]
Call for a reverence that will not decay.
The heroes there who fought in Freedom's
cause,
And never bowed, except to Heaven's laws,
Have won, like Tell, a justly laureled name [310]

That blooms forever in the land of fame.*
'Tis past! And now how brief its scenes appear!
Though tedious months compose each weary
year.

So are all nations, slowly passed away, [315]
Read and forgotten in a single day;

So the proud scenes, that raptured youth behold,
Were formed in centuries with uncounted gold.
And the rich towns where lonely swains are lost,
What anxious hours each little fortune cost! [320]
Yet most observers glance the surface o'er,
And hastening onward think of it no more.

Now the free Eagle folds his peaceful wings,
No longer restless with the fear of kings:
Heroes and sages fill the chairs of State, [325]
Selecting laws to guide the nation's fate.

Systems they planned, some part for every need,
But on one portion all were not agreed,
For half, with dangerous look of dark designs,
Claimed a free empire over feebler minds, [330]
And "pushed" with threatening dangers (was it
just?)

That Law, which tramples millions in the dust!
O sordid man! to retribution blind,
What strange ideas of freedom fill thy mind! [335]

Free to oppress, is from all virtue free,
And Vice with Liberty can ne'er agree.
For where's the single bondage strong or foul,
Like that which binds to earth the soaring soul?

Half driven from herself, thus Freedom spoke: [340]
I leave you, and forever, thou has broke
The silken cord that bound my joys to thee.

* Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil.—*Milton*.

[page 14]

Farewell, false Land, Freedom shall still be free.
Danger perhaps may lend to yon my name,
But Northern cities shall enjoy the fame. [345]

IV.

Trace now that slaver o'er the briny seas,
Whose starry banner flutters in the breeze,
With winds propitious and her sails unfurled,
She plunges onward to the western world.
Her wanton crew with reckless love of gold, [350]
Blackened with crimes that tongue has never
told,

Despising danger, virtue, shame and pain,
Torture* their victims for the greater gain.
Now, while at home, the priest on humble knees [355]
Is offering prayer for wanderers on the seas,
The angry skies with gloomy tempests lower,
And waves roll dark with fast increasing power.

Now dismal night usurps the boiling deep,
And billows roar in many a dizzy steep. [360]
Now watery mountains to the clouds arise,
The tinny bark is racked amid the skies,
And there relieved of half her load of woe,
Passes the lightning in her plunge below.

So warred the sons of Avarice with the waves, [365]
Till shrieking hundreds sank in watery graves;
But winds, at length, withdrew their dangerous
roar,

And thunders rolled, and lightnings flashed no
more. [370]
The thickened veil of night from sea withdrew,

* This torture consists of two parts. First, the slaver universally contains twice as many victims as comfort would permit; and, second, they are furnished with just as little food as will insure their lives.

[page 15]

When lo! Columbia rises on the view.

Sweet land of freedom, boasting joys untold!
Rich in thy cities, delicate with gold;
Self-governed people, mocking at control, [375]

Free as the winds that circle either pole!
Free! No, alas! on thy extended shore
Ten thousand kings oppress the trodden poor.
Thousands of thousands, crushed beneath their

sway, [380]
Would dare to perish soon as disobey.

Why is it thus? O virtuous fool to inquire!
Where will it end? 'Twill end as endeth fire.

Glance at those saints who flaunt in satins
rare— [385]

The "trade" supplies them with the clothes they
wear;

List to those prayers for hours devoutly made,
He owes his fortune to the "lawful trade."
Then ask no more why men of different mind [390]
Are called fanatics, innovating, blind.

Yet now* (how strange) its friends are heard
to say,
"The 'trade' is wrong and must be done away."
If wrong the vitals, and its blood the same, [395]

Say how the "sacred institution" came.
'Tis wrong! Eureka. Justice treads thy heels,
And every man "born free and equal" feels
His right, O Slavery, to his own control:
And thou must flee to traffic in the soul [400]
Of helpless children, wheresoever rays

* This is not intended to be understood as the exact date at which the abolition of the slave-trade was introduced, but that it was agitated among such scenes as the last page indicated, and the sketch might be introduced here as well as any where.

[page 16]

Of Freedom shine, and this shall be thy praise,
That thou canst boast a better, whiter pen
Of human yearlings than thy neighbors can!

Years passed, and most continued still to say [405]
"This foreign traffic must be done away;"

So they for profit, we for Freedom's cause,
Together joined, and curbed the aggressive laws,
Till now at last the foreign human trade,
Equal with plunder on the sea is made. [410]

Yet every month still brings some slaver o'er,
That lands her victims and returns for more.
Now "forced from home" — from Afric's easy
land,

Where richest fruits are raised by Nature's hand; [415]
Confined like ruffians, in a dismal jail,
And fully fed to insure a better sale;

Nor these alone, for ten to one are there,
Who *never* breathed a free, unpurchased air:
The driver comes in quest of "sorted hands:" [420]

He buys his drove — he starts for Southern
lands —
"Sale now is sure, he says, at *extra pay*,

And we must drive like Devils night and day." [425]
And by that word he measures every blow,
That fretful passion deals to vented woe,
Till every wrist is galled with bloody chains,

And famished terrors cease to chill their veins.
So wrecked, at last they find their journey's end,
But not a place of rest, nor pitying friend. [430]

For soon the oppressor goads them to the plain,
Where seven years' torture must complete their
pain;

And such destruction is the yearly fate
Of forty thousand from a single State. [435]

Must we, Virginia, deem this rumor true?
Thy sons *declare* it, and it is thy due.
Yes, forty thousand, in a single year,
Are torn from every tie to mortals dear.
The sons are sold, and snatched from mothers' arms. [440]

The maid is purchased for superior charms—
Whose whiter beauty stains Europa's queens—
To *grace* the living hells of New-Orleans.
And what, at times has "happened" to be true, [445]
The man that sells her is her father too!

Yet this condition comes by Nature's laws,
As each effect must follow from its cause;
For there the greatest wealth their land imparts
Is raising children for the Southern marts; [450]
For better bloods, with darker and less dear,
Are sold for forty millions* in a year.

To paint each scene, is not a work of mine,
One tale may tell, to fancy it is thine.
A tale of anguish in its native home— [455]
Sorrow that's shadowed by the Nation's dome.

Turn from the brightness of yon Eastern sky,
Where rosy smiles and crimson blushes vie,
For distant spires now glitter on the sight,
And all the world is bathed in dewy light. [460]

Yonder is one who left her cabin door
To weep alone upon the river's shore—
By proud Potomac's ever swelling flow,
Wafting rich commerce to the seas below,
Of "gold and silver, wheat and linen fine, [465]
Returning ivory, silks, and richest wine, —"
Like ancient Babylon, raised to life again,

* The value of slaves exported from Virginia alone, has been, *some* years, estimated by southern papers to be several times that amount.

Dealing for profit in the "souls of men."
Now gentle breezes curl the noble streams,
That flash with silver in the rising beams, [470]
And nature, all in beauty's rich array,
Smiles like perfection on her bridal day.
That mother's gaze with wild and burning eye,
On foreign vessels that are floating by,
Tells how she dreams the weary distance o'er, [475]
Out-stretched between her and the wished for
shore.
"O God forgive," the helpless mother cries,
While boiling tears o'erflow her swimming eyes,
"My daughter's lost! and my last son is sold, [480]
No comfort left to cheer me when I'm old.
So Heaven forgive, if, when he leaves my side,
I plunge forever in this happy tide"
She turns away. Now mark those fluttering
sighs— [485]
How like an arrow to her hut she flies!
This was her thought: "Perhaps they *let* me
stray,
For better chance to steal my son away."
Fear spoke the truth. O what a scene is there! [490]
A watchful mother frantic with despair,
Whose only friend to southern climes is sold
For torture, pain and death, as she's been told;
The driver comes! her task untouched is found,
She's now extended naked on the ground, [495]
And, scourged till blood from every opening
vein,
Flows freely downward to the clotting plain.
Such is the pain of one, to all no more
Than one small pebble to the ocean's shore. [500]

V.

Meantime the aid that "STAR-EYED science"
lends,
For often knowledge is the best of friends,
Had snatched its thousands from the worst of
fates [505]
And made them freemen in the Northern States.
There freed from dangers of the barbarous trade,
Each one was happy in the home he'd made.
From Jersey's coast to North and distant West,
Their humble mansions were with plenty blest. [510]
Once more let Fancy in her flight delay,
Gaze on the surface of that silver bay,
Extending eastward to the boundless sea,
To scan the lonely boatman gliding free.
His scanty clothes bespeak his lowly birth, [515]
But playful features mark his easy mirth.
On his dark cheek a scar, imbedded low,
Points to misfortune and a fearful blow;
While every motion, as he dips the waves,
Tells the free story of a former slave, [520]
Who now, though dark and burned with South-
ern heat,
Has flowered the path to many a fine retreat
Where the wild winds that thunder on the shore,
Calmed by the distance, waft a feeble roar. [525]
Beneath those trees where cooling shadows fall
On blooming shrubs, and flowers and cottage wall,
Light-hearted, tuneful as the birds of spring,
The happy mother and her daughter sing,
These are the treasures that delight his heart — [530]
Those are the scenes with which he ne'er can
part.

[page 20]

Thus Doulos lives, escaped from Southern bands;
Thus many hundreds in more Northern land.
What act was that which filled the land with woe? [535]
That brand of shame? O that no one could
know!
But its true end e'en ignorance might trace,
When blood-hounds started on the human chase. [540]
Their bay at first steals far o'er Freedom's plains,
Now near, it mingles with the clank of chains.
Now, even as deer before the hunters fly,
The fleeing Negroes every power apply.
Now the fierce hounds press close upon their rear; [545]
With desperate force they strain for refuge near;
Now but a river holds them from the shore,
Where free aggression would be felt no more.
'Tis the last hope—they plunge the mantled wave,
To these 't is freedom, to a part the grave. [550]
O where's the force of shame? that men must
flee
To Britain for protection from this "free
Enlightened nation?" And Religion, how
Art thou suborned to sin! Crimes are thy offer- [555]
ings now.
But Doulos, hunted like a beast of prey,
Fled for a blessing that was far away.
For all exertions short of hope were found,
And savage blood-hounds stretched him on the [560]
ground.
They bound him fast, and sought the nearest
sail,
Whose canvas bosomed to the mournful gale—
"It was that fatal and perfidious bark, [565]
Built in the eclipse and rigged with curses dark"—

And helmed their course to where Injustice
reigns,
Where Mercy perished in the land of chains.
Thus of himself deprived, to beauty blind, [570]
With scenes of anguish pictured on his mind,
Chilled with the terrors of his master's frowns,
They drove him trembling to the planter's
grounds;
Where fifty lashes were the mild salutes, [575]
That introduced him to the home of brutes,
Whose tortured fault was known to be the same,
That gave to Washington his brightest fame.
So turned the wheel; the Christian grasped
the prize. [580]
While satisfaction glistened in his eyes;
Then to his business with the usual air,
And closed the day with long instructive prayer.
Another scene, (and it is nothing odd,)
The Christian sells the minister of God! [585]
Yes, sells his brother with no more remorse,
Than farmers feel to sell a favorite horse;
And though that brother prays with tears to stay,
From wife and children he is torn away:
But Sabbath comes: to Church the saint repairs,* [590]
With gold-wrought Bible and a book of prayers,
To teach or hear, as circumstances choose,
The rash ingratitude of ancient Jews;
Or wicked Nineveh may be the theme;
Or prophet Daniel and some heathen's dream; [595]

* Mr. Warren, a gentleman who officiated as pastor of a Church in South-Carolina during six years, says: "I have seen men, yes, ministers of the Gospel, sell men—part husband and wife with apparently no more remorse of conscience than the New-England farmer feels in parting with a favorite horse. Why! American Slavery is the vilest system of oppression that ever existed or ever can exist."

[page 22]

Its drowsy length with lack of truth abundant,
Or with fictitious tales and sighs redundant.

"Nineteenthly" closed at last, he says, "My
friends,

Guard well your servants: disobedience ends [600]

In speedy ruin. Rank must be preserved

At all expense. So has the Bible served.

"Slavery," he adds, and with the Sacred Book

Half closed, low-voiced and slow with solemn look,

"It sprung from Heaven. 'Twas nursed by [605]

Christian hands

With wise benevolence for heathen lands."

As when some pirate's sins, attoned, are paid

With a small sum procured at his "trade,"

With brighter hopes he hastens to his friends, [610]

And for new plunder to the ocean bends,

There finds a prize, subjects her harmless crew,

And rifles all with desperation new;

So does the planter from that Church retire,

His avarice kindled with infernal fire, [615]

To deeds of equal justice, and his ends

Are but a copy of his ocean friends.

On weary wings the sad and gloomy hours

Pass o'er his negroes plying all their powers,

From earliest dawn till darkness shuts the scene, [620]

With scanty time to eat a lunch between.

Their swollen stripes, and scourge-directed force

Impelled by terrors of some torture worse,

Bid free-born nerves recoil with horrors, fresh

As if a thousand vipers hugged their flesh. [625]

And thus they toil, half naked, yet like rain

The sweat drips freely on the scorching plain;

Yet if they cease their scalding brows to dry,

The fiendish driver will the scourge apply.

These are thy works, O nation of disgrace! [630]
Built by the ruin of the human race;
These are the scenes of thy enchanting coast,
And their productions are thy constant boast;
Where tyrants loll on seats of rosewood frame,
And milk-white satins cushion o'er the game; [635]
Where velvet carpets form the silken floors,
And endless labor carved the massive doors;
Where Gothic aurials choose each ushered hue,
Or deepest red, or soft ethereal blue;
Where crimson curtains hide the gilded wall, [640]
And fairest servants wait the lordly call.
The careless time in new delights consumed,
While music floats along the air perfumed,
Returns the hour when they are wont to dine,
And sip together the enchanting wine. [645]
The marble leaf with costly viands crowned,
In formal style they slowly gather round.
Delicious fruits from lands beyond the sea,
With home productions of the first degree,
On massive silver, wrought by slaves divine, [650]
(With golden goblets for their ancient wine,)
They all partake, and when the banquet's
crowned,
The richest nectar flows a final round.
Meantime the slaves, o'erworked and racked with [655]
pain,
A trifling respite from their labors gain,
To eat in haste their stint of cheapest fare,*
And hurry back to endless toil and care.
And when at last night's drowsy vapors flow [660]
From sickly swamps, to meanest huts they go,

* Daring the busy part of the season this operation of eating by daylight is dispensed with.

There eat their corn, and stretch them on the
ground,
With naught but filthy rags to wrap them
round. [665]

If days are long when pressed with want and
fear,
What endless lifetimes must they linger here!
My hour is passed —then, Slavery, fare thee
well! [670]

The Muse refuses longer to delay—
Declines the tasks of Hercules to tell,
And to the future wings her various way—
Where each proud nation sinks in vile decay,
And useless palaces and temples fall, [675]
With MENE, TEKEL, written on the wall.

There Freedom's ensign floats with starry light,
And worthy honors fill the place of shame,
And every soul weeps o'er the buried night,
When bloody stripes were quivering on their
Fame [680]

And SLAVERY'S MERCIES seem to them the same
As dreams of Wisdom's folly, Virtue's vice,
Black lights, mild death, cool fire and burning ice.

Farewell my Muse, for thou art lost to view [685]
O'er flowery groves and gardens of the just,
Where vernal pleasures bloom forever new,
And living waters bid the wanderer thirst;
Where true Christianity has left the dust,
And shines with glories to its Author due, [690]
There veiled in light my liberated Muse,
Once more adieu!