

VOICES FROM SLAVERY,

**WRITTEN ON READING A PAPER BY JOSEPH STURGE ON THE
AGGRAVATED HORRORS OF THE SLAVE-TRADE — OCT., 1848.**

I. — CAPTURE AND EMBARKATION.

Hark! to the cry from Afric's shore,
The mingled sound of strife and battle;
 The prisoners come,
 Behold their doom;
A wretched drove of *human cattle!* [5]

Sold for a draught of liquid fire!
Bartered for toys, that hapless band!
 Oh, who can know
 The depth of woe
That fills each heart along the strand? [10]

Now packed like bales of senseless ware,
Within the vessel's murky hold;
 Close, closer still —
 They cram, they fill —
Oh guilt enormous! crimes untold! [15]

II. — MISERIES AT SEA.

Hark! to the sound that comes from afar,
Borne o'er the waves in utterance low;
 Deep stifled moans,
 And dying groans:
That living freight of human woe! [20]

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Now the full vessel courts the wind,
O'er swelling seas they swiftly go;
 And fever burns,
 And pity spurns
The palpitating mass below! [25]

But death in mercy thins the ranks;
Pulse after pulse forgets to beat —
 They gasp, they die
 In agony —
In quenchless thirst, and maddening heat! [30]

III. — LANDING IN THE WEST INDIES.

Hark! to the plaint from yonder shore,
A voice of woe, and helpless wailing —
 They land, they land
 On foreign strand,
Gaunt, trembling forms, in weakness failing! [35]

And now a transient dream of rest,
Ere to the human shambles driven;
 They feed them well,
 To make them sell —
Oh, mockery of mercy given! [40]

Soon as returning health appears,
To raise the feeble, nerve the strong,
 Away, away —
 In sad array —
With whip and menace urged along. [45]

IV. — SLAVE-MARKET.

Hark! to the wail from yonder mart,
The tale of grief and anguish spoke;
 Heart torn from heart —
 Friends sold apart —
And every tie of Nature broken! [50]

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Husbands and wives to meet no more!
Children from parents forced to sever!
 For paltry gold,
 To bondage sold,
Beyond the reach of hope for ever! [55]

Oh piteous sight! oh hapless throng!
Is there no mercy strong to save?
 Must thousands die
 In Slavery —
Their only freedom in the grave? [60]

V. — SLAVE-LABOUR.

Hark! to the voice from yon fair land,
Where all the sweets of Nature grow:
 Who tills the soil
 With grief and toil?
The wretched Slave! the child of woe! [65]

His *tyrant-master* goads him on —
He knows no sweets, he feels no rest;
 But whip and chains,
 And festering pains,
But mock the anguish of his breast! [70]

Bowed down beneath the galling yoke,
Scorned and reviled, he longs to die;
 But months and years,
 'Mid groans and tears,
Drag on in sad captivity! [75]

VI. — APPEAL TO CHRISTIANS.

For *whom* this labour, grief and sin?
Daughters of England, can it be,

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That in your Isle,
You sit and smile,
Yet *clad in fruits of Slavery?* [80]

“Oh, touch not, taste not, handle not,”
The produce raised on Freedom’s grave!
Else, while you sigh
O’er Slavery,
You press the links upon the Slave. [85]

For *you* that strife on Afric’s shore —
For *you* that vessel fraught with death —
The blood, the toil,
That feed the soil,
The scourged limbs, the wasting breath! [90]

VII. — FREEDOM OF THE GOSPEL.

Christians of England, haste, arise
The Bond of Brotherhood proclaim;
Christ died to save
The Negro-Slave —
Freedom for all in Jesus’ name. [95]

Spirit of Liberty, descend!
And make our hearts with joy forego
Each tempting good,
In clothes or food,
If purchased by a brother’s woe. [100]

Let every Nation, hand in hand,
In love, and peace, and strength combined,
United be,
One Family,
The Brotherhood of all Mankind. [105]

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