PERSECUTED CHILDREN'S COMPLAINT.

Four little children here you see,
   In modest dress appear;
Come listen to our songs so sweet,
   And our complaints you'll hear.

'Tis here we come to learn to read,
   And write and cypher too;
But some, in this enlightened land,
   Declare 'twill never do.

The morals of this favored town
   Shall be corrupted soon;
Therefore they strive, with all their might,
   To drive us to our home.

Sometimes when we have walk'd the street,
   Saluted have been,
By guns and drums, and cow-bells too,
   And horns of polished tin.

With warnings, threats, and words severe,
   They visit us at times;
And gladly would they send us off
   To Afric's burning clime.

Our teachers, too, they put in jail,
   Fast held by bars and locks;
Did e'er such persecution reign
   Since Paul was in the stocks?

But we forgive, forgive the men,
   Who persecute us so;
May God in mercy save their souls
   From everlasting woe.

You see, kind friends, with simple tone,
   We've offered up our boon;
We thank you for attention paid,
   So now, good afternoon.
The Yankee Girl

She sings by her wheel at that low cottage-door,
Which the long evening shadow is stretching before,
With a music as sweet as the music which seems
Breathed softly and faint in the ear of our dreams!

How brilliant and mirthful the light of her eye,
Like a star glancing out from the blue of the sky!
And lightly and freely her dark tresses play
O'er a brow and a bosom as lovely as they!

Who comes in his pride to that low cottage-door,
The haughty and rich to the humble and poor?
'T is the great Southern planter, the master who waves
His whip of dominion o'er hundreds of slaves.

"Nay, Ellen, for shame! Let those Yankee fools spin,
Who would pass for our slaves with a change of their skin;
Let them toil as they will at the loom or the wheel,
Too stupid for shame, and too vulgar to feel!

"But thou art too lovely and precious a gem
To be bound to their burdens and sullied by them;
For shame, Ellen, shame, cast thy bondage aside,
And away to the South, as my blessing and pride.

"Oh, come where no winter thy footsteps can wrong,
But where flowers are blossoming all the year long,
Where the shade of the palm-tree is over my home,
And the lemon and orange are white in their bloom!

"Oh, come to my home, where my servants shall all
Depart at thy bidding and come at thy call;
They shall heed thee as mistress with trembling and awe,
And each wish of thy heart shall be felt as a law."

"Oh, could ye have seen her—that pride of our girls—
Arise and cast back the dark wealth of her curls,
With a scorn in her eye which the gazer could feel,
And a glance like the sunshine that flashes on steel!

"Go back, haughty Southerner! thy treasures of gold
Are dim with the blood of the hearts thou hast sold;
Thy home may be lovely, but round it I hear
The crack of the whip and the footsteps of fear!
"And the sky of thy South may be brighter than ours,
And greener thy landscapes, and fairer thy' flowers;
But dearer the blast round our mountains which raves,
Than the sweet summer zephyr which breathes over slaves!

"Full low at thy bidding thy negroes may kneel,
With the iron of bondage on spirit and heel;
Yet know that the Yankee girl sooner would be
In fetters with them, than in freedom with thee!"

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The Slave Mother

Heard you that shriek? It rose
So wildly on the air,
It seem'd as if a burden'd heart
Was breaking in despair.

Saw you those hands so sadly clasped --
The bowed and feeble head --
The shuddering of that fragile form --
That look of grief and dread?

Saw you the sad, imploring eye?
Its every glance was pain,
As if a storm of agony
Were sweeping through the brain.

She is a mother pale with fear,
Her boy clings to her side,
And in her kyrtle vainly tries
His trembling form to hide.

He is not hers, although she bore
For him a mother's pains;
He is not hers, although her blood
Is coursing through his veins!

He is not hers, for cruel hands
May rudely tear apart
The only wreath of household love
That binds her breaking heart.

His love has been a joyous light
That o'er her pathway smiled,
A fountain gushing ever new,
Amid life's desert wild.

His lightest word has been a tone
Of music round her heart,
Their lives a streamlet blent in one --
Oh, Father! must they part?

They tear him from her circling arms,
Her last and fond embrace: --
Oh! never more may her sad eyes
Gaze on his mournful face.

No marvel, then, these bitter shrieks
Disturb the listening air;
She is a mother, and her heart
Is breaking in despair.


**Free Labor**

I wear an easy garment,
O'er it no toiling slave
Wept tears of hopeless anguish,
In his passage to the grave.

And from its ample folds
Shall rise no cry to God,
Upon its warp and woof shall be
No stain of tears and blood.

Oh, lightly shall it press my form,
Unladen with a sigh,
I shall not 'mid its rustling hear,
Some sad despairing cry.
This fabric is too light to bear
The weight of bondsmen's tears,
I shall not in its texture trace
The agony of years.

Too light to bear a smother'd sigh,
From some lorn woman's heart,
Whose only wreath of household love
Is rudely torn apart.

Then lightly shall it press my form,
Unburden'd by a sigh;
And from its seams and folds shall rise,
No voice to pierce the sky,

And witness at the throne of God,
In language deep and strong,
That I have nerv'd Oppression's hand,
For deeds of guilt and wrong.