

THE  
LIFE AND ADVENTURES  
OF  
**OLAUDAH EQUIANO;**  
OR,  
*GUSTAVUS VASSA,*  
THE AFRICAN.

FROM AN ACCOUNT WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

ABRIDGED BY A. MOTT.

TO WHICH IS ADDED  
SOME REMARKS ON THE SLAVE TRADE.



NEW YORK:

Published by Samuel Wood & Sons,  
No. 261 Pearl-street.

R. & G. S. WOOD, PRINTERS.



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“AM I NOT A MAN AND A BROTHER.”



“Ah pity human mis’ry, human wo!  
“’Tis what the happy to the unhappy owe.”

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1829.

## PREFACE.

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HAVING, for several years, been one of the Committee to visit the Female Department of the African Free School in New York ; and having also been occasionally at that for boys, I have observed that the tickets given to the pupils, as rewards for attention to their studies, have a very favourable tendency. A specific value being given to those tickets, they become a sort of currency in the schools, and are received by the teachers in payment for toys and other articles which are provided as premiums for the scholars. Similar observation induces me to believe that there is scarcely any thing which can be given to a child as a premium for good behaviour which has a better tendency than a book. This belief prompted me to attempt an abridgement of the Memoirs of Gustavus Vassa, the African ; which, as they contain many interesting circumstances, may not be thought unsuitable for distribution in those schools.

Whether or not the design of these extracts meet the approbation of the Trustees of the African Schools, I think it will be an interesting little work for children of any class, and I have therefore placed it in the hands of the publisher.

A. M.

*Hickory Grove, 6th mo. 1825.*

## GUSTAVUS VASSA.

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I OFFER here neither the history of a saint a hero, nor a tyrant. I believe there are few events in my life that have not happened to many. Did I consider myself a European, I might say my sufferings were great; but when I compare my lot with that of many of my own countrymen, I acknowledge the mercies of Providence in the occurrences of my life.

That part of Africa known by the name of Guinea, to which the trade for slaves is carried on, extends along the coast above 3400 miles, from Senegal to Angola, and includes a number of kingdoms; the most considerable of which is Benin, as it respects its extent, wealth, and richness of soil. It is bounded on the sea coast 170 miles—and its interior seems only to be terminated by the empire of Abyssinia, near 1500 miles from its beginning. In one of the most remote and fertile provinces of this kingdom I was born, in the year 1745. My father was one of those chiefs styled Embrenche, signifying a mark of grandeur.

As our country is one where nature is prodigal of her favours, our wants are few and easily supplied. In our buildings we study convenience rather than ornament. The houses never exceed one story in height, and are built of wood and thatched with reeds. The walls and floors of the lodging rooms are generally covered with mats. The dress of both sexes is nearly the same; it being generally a long piece of calico or muslin wrapped loosely round the body. Women, when not employed with the men in tilling the ground, spin, weave, and dye the cloth, then make it into garments:—with this cloth our beds are also covered. Our manner of living is very simple; the land being uncommonly rich and fruitful, produces many kinds of vegetables in abundance. We have

plenty of Indian corn, cotton, and tobacco. Pine apples grow very large without culture, and we have a variety of delicious fruits. All our industry is exerted in improving these blessings of nature. We are all habituated to labour from our earliest years: every one contributing to the common stock, and being unacquainted with idleness, we have no beggars.

Our tillage is exercised in a large common, and all the people resort thither in a body. As they do not use beasts, their instruments of husbandry are hoes, axes, shovels, and pointed irons. They generally take their weapons of defence also, for fear of surprise by their enemies. Our meat consists of bullocks, goats, and poultry; our vegetables, plantains, eddas, yams, beans, and Indian corn. The ceremony of washing before eating is strictly enjoined; and cleanliness is considered a necessary part of our religion. We believe there is one Creator of all things, and that he governs all events.

My parents had one daughter and a number of sons, of which I was the youngest. As I generally attended my mother, she took great pains in forming my mind and training me to exercise. In this way I grew up till about eleven years of age, when an end was put to my happiness in the following manner:

When the grown people were gone to labour, the children generally collected together to play, and one of them climbing up a tree, looked out and gave the alarm, if he saw the kidnappers approaching, as it was not uncommon for them to make use of such opportunities, and carry off all they could catch. But one day when all our people were gone to their work, and only myself and dear sister were left to watch the house; two men and a woman came and seized us both, and stopping our mouths that we should not cry, ran off with us into the woods, where they tied our hands, then carried us as far as they could before dark, and coming to a small house, they halted for the night. They offered us some food, but we could not eat, being quite overcome by fatigue and grief: our only relief was sleep, which allayed our trouble for a short time. The next morning we left the house and continued travelling all day. For some time we kept in the woods, but coming into a road, and seeing some people



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at a distance, we had hopes of being released ; and I began to cry for assistance. This made them tie me faster, and stop my mouth, and they soon put me into a sack. They also tied my sister's hands again, and stopped her mouth until we got out of sight of the people. When night came they offered us victuals again, but we refused them: the only comfort we had was in being in each other's arms, and bathing each other with our tears. But alas! we were soon deprived of even the comfort of weeping together. The next day proved to be one of great sorrow indeed, for my sister and myself were separated, while we lay clasped in each other's arms. It was in vain that we besought them not to part us—She was torn from me and carried away, while I was left in a state not to be described. I grieved continually, and for several days did not eat any thing but what they forced into my mouth.

After many days' travelling, and often changing my keepers, I fell into the hands of a chieftain in a pleasant country. This man had two wives, and several children, and they all used me well, and tried to comfort me ; particularly the first wife, who was some like my mother. Although we had travelled many days, these people spoke the same language we did. My master being a smith, I worked his bellows. I was also indulged in going with the maidens to the spring for water, and sometimes a small distance alone. The latter circumstance induced me to think of making my escape, and, as I had observed that our journeying was towards where the sun went down, I knew that my father's abode must be towards the place of its rising. Being oppressed with grief for my connexions, and my love of liberty great, I determined to take the first opportunity to make my escape : but in this I was disappointed. The houses and villages being skirted with woods and bushes, which were so thick that a person could easily conceal himself among them, I got into one of these thickets ; but the whole neighbourhood was soon in search of me, and they came several times so near that I could understand what they said ; and finding by that, that my home was farther off than I had supposed it to be. and the way so difficult that I should probably perish in the woods, I gave it up, and abandoned



myself to despair. However, when night came on, the idea of being devoured by wild beasts induced me, hungry and faint as I was, to creep to my master's kitchen, and lie down in the fire-place, where I was found in the morning; and being reprimanded by my master, he ordered me to be taken care of.

Not long after, I was sold again, and carried to a great distance. As I had acquired a little of several languages, from the time I left my own nation, I found some one that could understand me until I came to the sea-coast. To my great surprise, one evening, on our journey, my dear sister was brought to the same house. We were both so overcome we could not speak, but clung to each other and wept, which affected all who saw us; and when they knew that we were brother and sister they indulged us with being together. One of the men at night lay between us, and allowed us to hold each other's hand across him. This comfort, small as it may appear to some, was not so to us—but it was of short duration. Alas! when morning came we were again separated, and I never saw her more. My anxiety for *her* was greater than for myself. I remembered the happiness we had enjoyed together in our childish sports, and the indulgencies of maternal care, and fear that her sufferings would be great, made a deep and lasting impression on my mind, and her image was so indelibly fixed, that neither time, adversity, nor prosperity, has ever been able to remove it.

I was sold again, and travelling as before, we passed through a very fertile country, where, for the first time, I met with cocoa-nuts and sugar-cane. In one place I stayed nearly two months, and received much kindness; but in an unexpected moment I was obliged to relinquish these joys also. This change proved as painful as it was unexpected—for it soon discovered to me an element I had not before seen, and until then had no idea of. It also made me acquainted with such cruelties and hardships as I can never think or reflect upon but with horror.

All the nations and people I had hitherto seen, resembled my own; but now, after a lapse of six or seven months from the time I was kidnapped, I arrived at the

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sea-shore, and the first object that I saw was a SLAVE SHIP riding at anchor, waiting for her cargo. When I was taken on board, being roughly handled, and closely examined by those men whose complexion and language differed so much from any I had ever seen, I was apprehensive I had got into a world of bad spirits; and being quite overpowered with fear and anguish, I fell on the deck and fainted. After I came to a little, they offered me a small portion of spirits; but their horrid looks, red faces, and long hair, made me so fearful, that I refused to take it: however, they made me take a little. Having never tasted any before, the strange feeling it produced, threw me into great consternation—but I was not long in this reverie; being soon, with many of my country people, put under the deck into a loathsome and horrible place. We wished for death rather than life, and often refused to eat, for which we were beaten. At length understanding we were not always to remain in this dreadful situation, but were going to the country of these white people, to work for them, I became more reconciled; thinking that if nothing worse than working was to be my lot, it was not so desperate.

After enduring more hardships than I can now relate, and which are inseparable from this iniquitous traffic, we arrived at Barbadoes and anchored off Bridge-Town. When we were taken on shore we were put into a pen, like so many sheep. On a signal being given, the buyers rushed into the yard and made their choice; and, like *ministers of destruction*, separated friends and relatives without remorse. But the cries of those so separated were very moving to those *capable* of feeling. Must every feeling of tenderness be sacrificed to *avarice*—must parents lose their children, brothers their sisters, husbands their wives, and be prevented from cheering their gloom with the small comfort of being together, and mingling their sufferings! This separation, while it has no advantage, aggravates the distress, and adds fresh horrors even to the wretchedness of slavery.

I stayed but a short time here, when I, with some others, were shipped for North America. We were better treated than when on our voyage from Africa, and soon landed up a river in Virginia, where we were separa-



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ted, and I was quite alone, as it respected my suffering shipmates. I was placed on a plantation to weed grass and gather stones; but my master being unwell, I was sent for to fan him while he slept. In his room I saw many strange things; such as a watch, whose noise alarmed me, and the pictures seemed to gaze me in the face. I thought it was a way they had to keep their great men after they were dead. These things, with a black woman that I saw as I entered the house, who was cooking, and had a large iron on her head, which locked her mouth so that she could scarcely speak, and could not eat or drink, frightened me extremely; but when my master awoke I was relieved by being sent out of the room.

Some time after this, Michael H. Pascal, who commanded a trading ship, called the Industrious Bee, came to my master's, and taking a fancy to me, purchased and sent me on board of his ship. It was a fine one, laden with tobacco and destined for England. My knowledge of the English language was still imperfect; but being very desirous of knowing the place of our destination, I made such inquiries as I could, when some of the people made me believe I was going to my native country; which, with the thought that I should have so many wonderful things to tell of when I got home, made me very happy.

These white men, and their treatment of me, was so different from that which I had before received on ship board, rendered me very comfortable; and on board this ship I received my name of Gustavus Vassa: before, I had been called Jacob. But as it respected going home I was soon undeceived, when we came in sight of the English coast.

On our passage a lad named Richard Baker, whom we mostly called Dick, showed me many kindnesses, instructing me in the English language, &c. Our friendship terminated about two years after, with the termination of his life. It was early in the spring of 1757 when I arrived in England. One morning when I went on deck, I found it covered with snow. As I had never seen any before, I thought it was salt—ran to the mate and told him somebody had thrown salt all over the deck. He told me to bring some of it to him, which I did, and he desired me to taste of it: I did so, and was surprised with its coldness;

and more so, when I saw a heavy shower of it fall from the clouds the same day.

I had often seen my master and Dick employed in reading; and I had a desire to talk to the books, as I thought they did, and learn how all things had a beginning. For that purpose I often took up a book and talked to it, then placed it close to my ear in hopes it would answer me. And when I found it remained silent, I was much concerned.

The summer following I was taken by a press gang on board of the ship-of-war called the Roebuck. When I came on board I was surprised at the number of men and guns, but as my knowledge increased, my surprise diminished. We were several times on the coasts of France and Holland; we also went to Scotland and the Orkneys. When we returned to England I was so afflicted with chilblains that I was sent to the hospital, where I came near losing one of my legs from an apprehension of mortification.

My master being appointed lieutenant of the Namur, we sailed with the fleet for America; and after having many engagements with the French, by sea and land, we returned to England about the close of the year 1758. During my stay here I received much kindness; was sent to a school where I made much progress in reading, &c.

The Namur being again ready for sea, we were ordered on board and sailed for the Mediterranean. In this voyage we had some close engagements with the French, in which many of my companions fell victims, and I narrowly escaped with my life; which at times made a serious impression on my mind, and I returned thanks to Providence for my preservation. My desire for learning continuing, some of my shipmates taught me, so that I could read in the Bible; and one of them, a sober man, explained many passages to me.

I had now served my master faithfully a long time, and his kindness to me gave hopes that when we arrived again in England I should be free, which I ventured to tell him; but he was offended, for he had determined to send me to the West-Indies. Accordingly, soon after our arrival in England, at the close of the year 1762, he found a vessel bound to one of these islands, and taking me on board.

gave me in charge to the captain. I remonstrated with him; telling him he had taken all my wages and my prize money, and I thought I ought now to have my freedom; but to no purpose. Taking my only coat from my back, he got into his boat and went off. I followed them as long as I could, with aching eyes, and a heart ready to burst with anguish. I wept for some time, and with earnest supplication besought the Lord not to abandon me in my distress, nor cast me off forever. In time, my grief began to subside a little, and I became more calm.

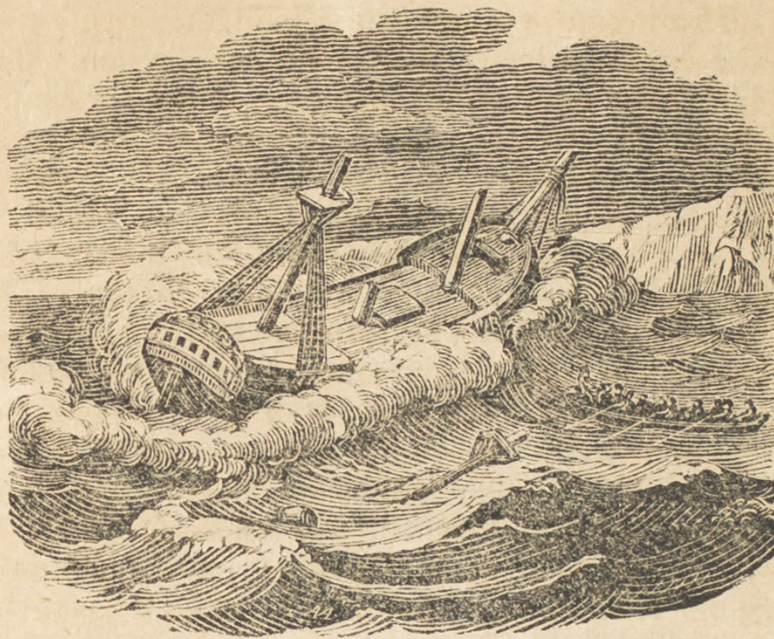
The Captain, whose name was Doran, calling me to him, told me if I would work like the other boys in the ship, I would fare the better for it; but the remembrance of what I had seen in the West-Indies, and the tempestuous voyage we had, rendered me miserable indeed. Nor were my terrors abated, when, on the 13th of February 1763, we discovered the Island of Montserrat. These regions of sorrow, chilled me to the heart, and brought to my view nothing but misery, stripes, and chains. In this state of mind we came to an anchor; and, to complete my distress, two of the sailors robbed me of my money, about eight guineas, which I had collected by doing small jobs on board the ships of war, and which I hid when my master took my coat.

Helping to unload and load the ship, in a heavy surf, and under a hot sun, was painful and dangerous work; but when the ship was ready to sail for England, the captain sent for me, and with a trembling heart and faltering step I went to him, and found with him a Mr. Robert King, a quaker and a merchant. He told me the charge he had to get me a good master, and he had got me one of the best on the island. Mr. King also said he had bought me on account of my good character, and that he did not reside there altogether, but part of the time in Philadelphia, where he expected soon to go, and he would then put me to school, and fit me for a clerk. This conversation relieved my mind, and I thanked the captain for giving me so good a character. My new master soon asked me what I could do, saying he did not mean to treat me hard. I told him I could shave and dress hair pretty well. I could also refine wines, which I had learned on shipboard. I could write, and understood arithmetic as far as the Rule of Three.

I was, during our stay on the island, employed in managing the boats to load and unload vessels. My master often hired slaves of their masters to work for him, and found them victuals himself, because he thought what they were allowed was not sufficient for the work they did. This pleased them so well that they would work for him in preference to any other gentleman. Indeed the character which captain Doran had given me of him I found to be correct—he possessed an amiable disposition, was very charitable and humane. In my passing about the Island I had great opportunity of seeing the wretched situation, and dreadful usage of the poor slaves. This reconciled me to my own condition, and made me thankful for falling into the hands of such a kind master. He was several times offered a great price for me, which induced me to double my diligence, for I was very much afraid of falling into the hands of those men who did not allow their slaves a sufficient support, and treated them so cruelly.

Having obtained three pence I began a little trade, and as I passed about from one island to another, I soon gained a dollar, then more, and bought me a *Bible*. This, with my "Guide to the Indians," that I had given me in England, I loved above all other books. My success induced me to venture again, and being about to sail in a vessel of my master's for Georgia and Charleston, I took a small venture with me, and on my return sold what I had obtained very well. Thus I continued trading until the year 1765, when my master prepared for going to Philadelphia. This, with the offer he made of crediting me with a tierce of rum, and another of sugar, and encouraging me to industry, that I might get enough to purchase my freedom, which he promised I should have for what he gave for me, elated me very much, and I told him it was what I had hoped for.

In a short time we sailed, and arriving safe in port, I sold my venture pretty well. Finding things plenty and cheap, I again laid in my little store, and returned with the vessel to Montserrat, from thence to Georgia—back to Montserrat, and to Georgia the second time. This time, being in a yard one evening with some negroes, whose master coming home drunk, he, and a very rough white



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man with him, beat me almost to death ; though I gave a good account of myself, and he knew my captain. In the morning they took me to the jail. As I did not return to the ship in the evening, nor make my appearance in the morning, the captain became very uneasy, and making inquiry, learned where I was ; and when he saw how I was mangled he could not help weeping. He soon took me to his lodgings, where with his kindness in watching me all hours of the night, and the skilful attention of an eminent physician, I recovered so as to get out of bed in about sixteen or eighteen days, and in four weeks, being able to go on duty, we sailed for Montserrat, where I continued until the beginning of the year 1766.

Every day now brought me nearer to my freedom, and I longed to be at sea that I might be gaining something to obtain it. My master having purchased a larger vessel, in lading her he gave me an opportunity of taking more goods than I had done before ; and we sailed again for Philadelphia, where we arrived in good time—and selling my goods to honest people I did very well.

Thus passing from one port to another, with my kind master's and captain's indulgence, and my own indefatigable industry, I at length obtained the sum required for my liberty ; but how to make my master the offer of it I was at a stand. Nevertheless, one morning while he and the captain were at breakfast, I ventured, by telling him what he had promised, and that I had got the money—at which he was much surprised. The captain told him I had come honestly by it, and he must be as good as his word. Upon which he directed me to get a manumission drawn and he would sign it. At this my heart leaped for joy ; and going to the office, I hardly knew whether my feet touched the ground or not. And when the whole was completed, and I was in reality *free*, I felt like another being—My joy was indescribable : but my master and captain entreated me not to leave them. Here my duty and inclination were at variance, and caused me a hard struggle. Gratitude for favours induced me to stay, though I longed to go to London and see my old captain Pascal, and let him know I was free.

Our first voyage was to Savannah in Georgia, by way of Eustatia. Here I met as usual with poor treatment, re-

ceiving uncurrent money for my goods, and some other abuses hard for human nature to bear; but in due time we were ready for sailing. As we were taking some bullocks on board, one of them butted the captain in the breast so that he soon became unable to do duty, and died before we reached our port. This was a heavy stroke to me, for he had been my true friend, and I loved him as a father. The mate was also unwell, so that the principal management of the vessel devolved upon me. Having, by the kindness of the captain, learned a little of navigation, I found it useful, and we got in in safety. Many were astonished when they heard that I had brought the vessel into port, and they gave me the appellation of captain. By the captain's persuasion, I had now brought some turkeys, which I disposed of at three hundred per cent.

My old friend, the captain, being now gone, I set my heart again on going to England—but, by the entreaties of Mr. King, I consented to go one more voyage to Georgia, and about the last of January 1767, we took our departure in the Nancy with a new captain. Steering a more westerly course than usual, we in a few days got among the breakers, and our vessel was wrecked on the Bahama Banks. The night being dark we were in great consternation, but remained as quiet as we could until morning, when some of us prepared the boat, but others drank as if there was no danger. However, with the great exertions of a few, we all got on one of the Bahama Islands. When we came near the shore we saw several flamingoes on the beach, and supposing them to be cannibals we were very much alarmed, but they soon took to their wings and relieved us of our anxiety. On this and the adjacent islands we remained many days; and having some oranges, limes, and lemons, I planted some of the seeds in the good soil, as a token to any that might be cast away hereafter. In the day time we went out in search of fresh water, for want of which we suffered extremely; at night we returned to the same island. When we were almost famished with hunger, thirst, and fatigue, we to our great joy saw a sail; it proved to be a friendly one, and we were taken (but not without experiencing a severe gale) to New Providence. It is impossible for any one who has not suffered such

hardships, to conceive the joy we felt at these deliverances. The inhabitants were kind, and showed us a great deal of hospitality for more than two weeks; when we again got on board a vessel and sailed for Savannah where we arrived in a few days. From thence we went to Martinico, and so to Montserrat, where we arrived 23d of July, after an absence of six months; in which time I had experienced the delivering hand of Providence more than once, when all human means seemed hopeless.

After relating the loss of the vessel; our various difficulties, &c. to Mr. King, I informed him of my resolution to go to London; and although he would gladly have kept in his service, he gave me the following certificate:

*Montserrat, — 1767.*

The bearer hereof, Gustavus Vassa, was my slave for upwards of three years, during which he always behaved himself well, and discharged his duty with honesty and assiduity.

R. KING.

When I had obtained this certificate, I parted with my kind master, with sincere gratitude, and soon embarked for England. We had a prosperous voyage, and when the captain paid me my wages I had thirty seven guineas. I soon found many of my old acquaintance, and particularly captain Pascal. He was surprised to see me, and asked me "How I came back." I said in a ship. To which he replied, "I suppose you did not *walk* on the water." We had some conversation about our old matters, but not to any satisfaction.

I now set my mind on getting some more learning, and attended school diligently for some time, but my money being mostly spent, I undertook to perfect myself in hair-dressing. I also engaged with Dr. Charles Irving, who was celebrated for his success in making salt-water fresh. My wages, which were only twelve pounds a year, not being sufficient, I determined again to try the sea. and having long a desire to see Turkey I engaged on board the Delaware, and we sailed in July, and went to Italy, and had a delightful sail among the Archipelago islands; from thence to Smyrna in Turkey. The mate also taught me more of navigation, which I was fond of. In a few months our ship was laden with a rich cargo of silks and

other articles, and I returned to England well pleased with my voyage.

The May following we made a delightful trip to Portugal, where I saw many curiosities, and returned to London in July. Our next voyage was to Genoa, for which place we sailed in September. I also saw Naples, a beautiful city and very clean. When we had finished our business we went to Smyrna. Here I saw many caravans from India. Among other articles, they brought with them great quantities of locusts, a kind of pulse resembling French beans but longer, which are sweet and palatable. With another rich cargo we sailed in March, and arrived in England in July 1770.

The April following I went once more for the West-Indies with captain William Robertson, in the Granada Planter. We were at Madeira, Barbadoes, and the Grenadas. Here I met with my usual West-India treatment of hard dealing, and was not very well pleased with my voyage; but we soon returned to England. My next trip was to Jamaica, as steward, with captain David Watts. While on that Island I saw many cruelties inflicted on the poor slaves, and heard of many more. They retain many of the customs here, which are practised in Africa, particularly putting victuals, pipes and tobacco in the graves with their dead.

On my return to England, in August, I entered again into the service of Dr. Irving, where I remained until May 1773. An expedition was now fitting out to explore a North-east passage to India, conducted by the Hon. Constantine John Phipps, in his Majesty's sloop of war, the Race Horse. My master being anxious to accompany them, I attended him on board, 24th of May. We were soon joined by the sloop Carcass, captain Lutwidge, and on the 13th of June we were near Shetland. On the 20th we began to use Dr. Irving's apparatus for making salt water fresh. I attended the distillery, and frequently purified from 26 to 40 gallons a day. On the 28th we reached Greenland, where I was surprised to see that the sun did not go down. On the 29th and 30th we saw large plains of ice, and we fastened to one that was 80 yards wide. While here we killed many different kind of animals, among which were nine bears. About the 1st of

August we got fast in the ice, but by sawing it away we relieved the vessels some. After we had been eleven days in this deplorable situation, hourly expecting to be crushed to pieces, the wind changed and the weather became mild, so that the ice gave way, and in about thirty hours with hard labour we got into open water, to our great joy and gladness of heart. On the 19th we left this dreary clime, which affords very little food and no shelter, and arrived at Deptford on the 30th of September, ending our Arctic voyage with about four months absence, imminent dangers, and rejoicing to be once more in England. I returned with Dr. Irving to London and staid some time. During this period I began to reflect seriously on the many dangers I had escaped, and particularly in my last voyage; and they made a lasting impression on my mind. My reflections were often turned to the awfulness of eternity, and I seemed a burden to myself. While in this state I thought of going again to Turkey, but was disappointed. I asked many the way to Heaven, for I was convinced that no unclean thing could enter there. Some told me one way and some another; which only tended to confusion. I then took to my Bible, where I found it said, "No new thing happeneth under the sun," and I received some encouragement.

While under those serious impressions I made several voyages to Spain as steward. On board the first ship I heard much swearing, and I was very fearful I should fall into the habit again, and then there could be no hope of my salvation: confusion seized me and I was almost induced to cast myself overboard, but recollecting that "no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him," I paused, and was convinced that the Lord was better to me than I deserved. Some time after this many things which had occurred in my past life were presented before me, and I saw the hand of Providence in them to guide and protect me, though I knew it not. When I considered my state, and what a great debtor I was, I wept.

The Bible was now my companion and comfort. I prized it much, with many thanks to God that I could read it for myself. The worth of a soul cannot be told, and I viewed the unconverted people of the world in an awful state, being without God and without hope.



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On our return from our last voyage we picked up eleven pitiable men. They were in a small boat without victuals, compass, water, or any thing else, and must soon have perished. As soon as they got on deck they fell on their knees and thanked God for their deliverance. Thus I saw verified what was written in the 107th Psalm. They told us they were Portuguese, and that their vessel had sunk with two of the crew in it.

Dr. Irving having a mind for a new adventure, to cultivate a plantation at Jamaica and the Musquito shore, wished me to accompany him; to which, with the persuasion of my friends, I consented; and in the month of November 1775 we sailed in the sloop Morning Star, David Miller, captain, and arrived at Jamaica the 14th of January. We went soon to the Musqueto shore and began to cultivate the land. After enduring many hardships, and the rainy season coming on and washing away what we had put in the ground, I obtained permission of the Doctor, and taking leave of him and my other friends, I set sail again for England; but meeting with disappointments and bad usage, it was a long time before we got even to Jamaica, where Dr. Irving had arrived before me. However, I soon after arrived at Plymouth and from thence went to London with a heart filled with thanks to God for his mercies. Such were the various scenes which I was a witness to, and the fortune I experienced until the year 1777. Since that period my life has been more uniform. Being weary of a seafaring life and the impositions I had met with in my commercial business, I shortly engaged once more at service, where I continued for the most part until 1784.

I once had a proposition made me to go as a missionary to Africa, and endeavour to convert my countrymen: but I had suffered so much by the intrigues of men, I feared they would serve me worse than Alexander the copper-smith did St. Paul, if I had attempted to go to Africa. I visited different parts of England, and had intercourse with many men of rank and respectability, and they treated me kindly.

In 1784 I embarked as steward on board the London, captain Hopkins, and made a trip to New York. I admired the place much. Provisions of every kind were

plenty and cheap, but our stay was short. In March 1785 I sailed again for Philadelphia, where we arrived in May. I was very glad to see this favourite place, and my pleasure was much increased in seeing the worthy Quakers freeing and easing the labours of many of my countrymen. And it rejoiced my heart when one of those people took me to the Free School where I saw the children of my colour instructed, and their minds cultivated to fit them for usefulness. After my return to England, accompanied by some of my African brethren, we presented an address of thanks to some of the members of this society who had been also engaged in our behalf, and we were kindly received.

The next year I went again to Philadelphia in the Harmony, captain John Willet, and on my return I was informed that Government was preparing to send some of my countrymen to form a settlement on the coast of Africa, and that vessels were engaged to carry them to Sierra Leona. This filled me with prayers and rejoicing. I was sent for to meet a committee who were sitting on this subject. They proposed my going as superintendant. I pointed out many difficulties, particularly on account of the slave dealers; but they pressed me so hard, I consented to go as commissary, and proceeded immediately to my duty. After much difficulty and delay we set sail with 426 persons on board, and reached our destined port in June, just as the rainy season commenced. Having been closely confined for several months we were unprepared for such a season, and many of them died. Thus was the benevolent intention frustrated for that time, and I returned to England.

Since that period my life has passed in a more even tenor, and a great part of my study has been to assist in the cause of my much injured countrymen. In 1788 I had the honour of presenting the Queen with a petition in behalf of my African brethren, which was received most graciously by her majesty.

I now request the reader's indulgence, as I have aimed at simple truth in relating the chequered scenes of my life. I early learned to look for the hand of God in minute circumstances, and this has made them of importance to me. And to those who are desirous of doing



justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly before God, there is scarce any book so trifling, but they may gather some instruction from it.

END OF GUSTAVUS VASSA.

NOTE. In a work that has lately come into my hands I find this additional information respecting Gustavus Vassa :

“About the time of writing his Narrative he married and settled in London; and a son of his named Sancho, who received a good education, was assistant librarian to Sir Joseph Banks, and also secretary to the Committee for Vaccination.” A. M.

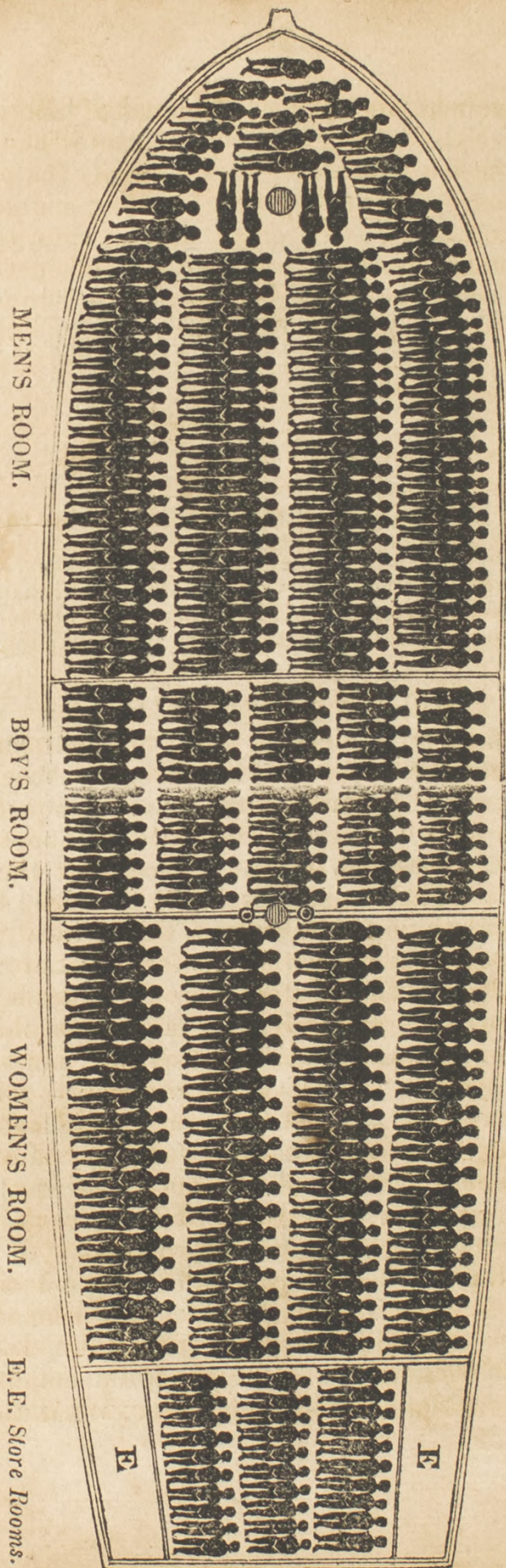


The publishers have thought proper to enlarge this small work by adding the following Remarks upon the Slave Trade: not with a view to excite the indignation of any, but to give the young and the uninformed a correct idea of what the poor inhabitants of Africa suffer; for which their oppressors can give no better excuse, than that they are “guilty of a skin not coloured like their own.”

### REMARKS ON THE SLAVE TRADE.

It must afford great pleasure to every true friend to liberty, to find that the cause of the unhappy Africans engrosses the general attention of the humane, in many parts of Europe; but we do not recollect to have met with a more striking illustration of the barbarity of the slave-trade, than in a small pamphlet lately published by a society at Plymouth, in Great Britain; from which the Philadelphia Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, have taken the following extracts, and have added a copy of the plate, which accompanied it. Perhaps a more powerful mode of conviction could not have been adopted, than is displayed in this small piece. Here is presented to our view one of the most horrible spectacles—a number of human creatures, packed, side by side, almost like herrings in a barrel, and reduced nearly to the state of being buried alive, with just air enough to preserve a degree of life sufficient to make them sensible of all the horrors of their situation. To every person who has been at sea, it must present a scene of wretchedness in the extreme; for, with every comfort, which room, air, variety of nourishment, and careful cleanliness can yield, it is still a wearisome and irksome state. What then must

*Plan of a Slave Ship's lower deck, with Negroes in the proportion of not quite one to a ton.*



it be to those who are not only deprived of the necessaries of life, but confined down the greater part of the voyage to the same posture, with scarcely the privilege of turning from one painful side to the other, and subjected to all the nauseous consequences arising from sea-sickness, and other disorders, unavoidable amongst such a number of forlorn wretches! Where is the human being that can picture to himself this scene of wo, without, at the same time, execrating a trade which spreads misery and desolation wherever it appears? Where is the man of real benevolence, who will not join heart and hand in opposing this barbarous, this iniquitous traffic?

“The annexed plate represents the lower deck of an African ship, of two hundred and ninety-seven tons burden, with the slaves stowed in it, in the proportion of not quite one to a ton.

“In the men’s apartment the space allowed to each is six feet in length, by sixteen inches in breadth. The boys are each allowed five feet by fourteen inches; the women, five feet ten inches by sixteen inches, and the girls four feet by twelve inches. The perpendicular height between the decks is five feet eight inches.

“The men are fastened together, two and two, by handcuffs on their wrists, and by irons riveted on their legs. They are brought up on the main deck every day, about eight o’clock; and, as each pair ascends, a strong chain, fastened by ring-bolts to the deck, is passed through their shackles; a precaution absolutely necessary to prevent insurrection. In this state, if the weather is favourable, they are permitted to remain about one third part of the twenty-four hours; and during this interval they are fed, and their apartment below is cleaned; but when the weather is bad, even these indulgences cannot be granted them, and they are only permitted to come up in small companies of about ten at a time, to be fed, when, after remaining a quarter of an hour, each mess is obliged to give place to the next in rotation.

When a ship arrives at a port in the West-Indies, the slaves are exposed to sale, except those who are very ill, they being left in the yard to perish by disease or hunger. The healthy are disposed of by auction; the sickly by scramble. The sale by scramble is thus de-

scribed: the ship being darkened by sails, the purchasers are admitted, who, rushing forward with the ferocity of brutes, seize as many slaves as they have occasion for. In none of the sales is any care taken to prevent the separation of relatives or friends; but, husbands and wives, parents and children, are parted with as little concern as sheep and lambs by the butcher. *Abstract of the evidence laid before a committee of the British Parliament, pages 46, and 47.*

The field slaves are called out by day-light to their work: if they are not out in time, they are flogged. When put to their work they perform it in rows, and, without exception, under the whip of drivers, a certain number of whom are allotted to each gang. Such is the *mode* of their labour: as to the time of it, they begin at day-light, and continue, with two intermissions, (one for half an hour in the morning, the other for two hours at noon,) till sunset. Besides this, they are expected to range about and pick grass for the cattle, either during the two hours *rest* at noon, or after the fatigues of the day.

In the crop season, the labour is of much longer duration. Mr. Dalrymple says, they are obliged to work as long as they can: that is, as long as they can keep awake or stand. Sometimes through excess of fatigue, they fall asleep; when it has happened to those who feed the mills, that their arms have been caught therein and torn off. Mr. Cook, on the same subject, states, that they work in general, eighteen hours out of the twenty-four: he knew a girl lose her hand by the mill while feeding it: being overcome with sleep, she dropped against the rollers.

*Abstract of the evidence, pages 55, 56.*

All the facts that have been now adduced, are of unquestionable authority, having been extracted from the evidence laid before the house of Commons by eye-witnesses to the facts. Let now every honest man lay his hand on his breast, and seriously reflect, whether he is justifiable in countenancing such barbarities; or whether he ought not to reject with horror, the smallest participation in such infernal transactions. To the weaker sex, whose amiable characteristic it is, to be "tremblingly alive" to every tale of woe, the friends of the abolition return their warmest acknowledgments, for the zeal with

which many of them have espoused the cause of humanity, and for the noble example they have shown, in rejecting the produce of slavery and misery.

When the cargo of a slave ship is brought to market, it frequently happens that the husband and wife, being sold to different purchasers, are violently separated, probably never to see each other more. When purchased, they are generally marked on the breast with a red hot iron. The poor victims are also sometimes fastened to a ladder to be flogged, which is occasionally laid flat upon the ground for severer punishment.

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### A SUBJECT

FOR CONVERSATION AND REFLECTION AT THE TEA-TABLE.

[*Originally published in England.*]

THE following beautiful pieces are the production of the pen of our deservedly admired, and charming poet, Mr. Cowper. The genuine poetic pathos they display, and the ardent love of freedom with which they glow, cannot fail of awakening the sympathy, and engaging the attention, of the benevolent admirers of the muses.

When we take a survey of the benefits we derive from the universal commerce carried on between distant nations, and notice its natural tendency to unite together in one grand whole, under one common parent, all the kindreds of the earth, we cannot but admire the wisdom of that Being who so governs and over-rules the passions and interested views of men, as to render these the means of his bestowing most extensive blessings on the human race. But when, in the progress of the survey, and after having contemplated with pleasure and exultation the manifold diffusive advantages, which, by such means, are enriching and felicitating the nations of the earth, from pole to pole, and from one end of heaven to the other; when, after having observed, successively, barbarism giving place to civilization, confusion to order, despotism to liberty, and wretchedness and misery succeeded by prosperity and happiness; when, after dwelling with rapture on this enchanting scene, our attention is directed to one particular, but extensive part of the globe, to the vas-

regions of Africa, what an accursed species of commerce do we see there encouraged! a TRAFFIC IN MEN! what different emotions do we feel! Our whole frame receives a sudden shock, and, instead of being elevated with admiration, or soothed with tranquil joy, we are lost in pensive melancholy, and are agitated with horror! The mind recovering a little the power of recollection, which it had thus well nigh lost, will naturally fall into the following train of

## REFLECTIONS.

— — — My ear is pain'd,  
 My soul is sick with every day's report  
 Of wrong and outrage with which earth is fill'd.  
 There is no flesh in man's obdurate heart:  
 It does not feel for man; the natural bond  
 Of brotherhood is sever'd as the flax  
 That falls asunder at the touch of fire.  
 He finds his fellow GUILTY of a skin  
 NOT COLOUR'D like his own; and, having pow'r  
 T' enforce the wrong, for such a WORTHY cause,  
 Dooms and devotes him as his lawful prey:  
 And worse than all, and most to be deplor'd  
 As human nature's broadest, foulest blot,  
 Chains him, and tasks him, and exacts his sweat  
 With stripes, that mercy, with a bleeding heart  
 Weeps when she sees inflicted on a BEAST.  
 Then what is man? and what man seeing this,  
 And having human feelings, does not blush  
 And hang his head, to think himself a man.  
 I would not have a slave to till my ground,  
 To carry me, to fan me while I sleep,  
 And tremble when I wake, for all the wealth  
 That sinews bought and sold have ever earn'd.  
 No! dear as freedom is, and in my heart's  
 Just estimation priz'd above all price,  
 I had much rather be myself the slave,  
 And wear the bonds, than fasten them on him.  
 We have no slaves at home—then why abroad?  
 And they themselves, once ferried o'er the waves  
 That part us, are emancipate and loos'd.  
 Slaves cannot breathe in England: if their lungs  
 Receive our air, that moment they are free;  
 They touch our country and their shackles fall.  
 That's noble, and bespeaks a nation proud  
 And jealous of the blessing. Spread it then,  
 And let it circulate through every vein  
 Of all your empire; that where Britain's power  
 Is felt, mankind may feel her MERCY too.

After these noble sentiments, and such glowing poetic fire, in favour of liberty, and in detestation of oppression,

it may not be displeasing to present the reader, without entering into any minute detail of all the miseries which, by European avarice, cruelty, and wickedness, are entailed on the ill-fated and wretched Africans, with a simple and pathetic delineation of what may naturally be supposed to pass, at times, through the mind of the enslaved Negro. However incapable, he may be just in such a manner to speak the sentiments of his mind, yet, from his condition and circumstances, we may easily imagine that he, as a mere percipient being, must frequently feel like the following.

To enter more fully into the spirit of this, let the reader realize the situation of the poor and helpless African. Jaded with excessive fatigue, and sinking under the weight of inhuman punishments, he comes to his miserable hut, throws himself on his mat, and seeks relief from his woes in the forgetfulness of sleep. Scarce does he slumber, but he starts, awakened with the dreadful apprehension, that already the iron hand of oppression is about to repeat the accustomed wanton cruelties. Thus overpowered with fatigue and fear, nature refuses her wanted balm. A crowd of thoughts rush into his indignant mind; and, after long pondering his condition, he breaks forth into the following

#### COMPLAINT.

Forc'd from home and all its pleasures,  
 Afric's coast I left forlorn;  
 To increase a stranger's treasures  
 O'er the raging billows borne.  
 Men from England bought and sold me,  
 Paid my price in paltry gold;  
 But, though theirs they have enroll'd me,  
 MINDS are never to be sold.

Still in thought as free as ever,  
 What are England's rights, I ask?  
 Me from my delights to sever,  
 Me to torture, me to task?  
 Fleecy locks and black complexion  
 Cannot forfeit nature's claim:  
 Skins may differ, but affection  
 Dwells in white and black the same.

Why did all creating nature  
 Make the plant for which we toil?  
 Sighs must fan it, tears must water,  
 Sweat of ours must dress the soil.  
 Think ye, masters, iron hearted,  
 Lolling at your jovial boards,  
 Think how many backs have smarted,  
 For the sweets your cane affords!

Is there, as you sometimes tell us,  
 Is there one who reigns on high?  
 Has he bid you buy and sell us,  
 Speaking from his throne, the sky?  
 Ask him if your knotted scourges,  
 Fetters, blood-extorting screws,  
 Are the means which duty urges  
 Agents of his will to use.

Hark! he answers—wild tornadoes,  
 Strewing yonder shores with wrecks,  
 Wasting towns, plantations, meadows,  
 Are the voice with which he speaks.  
 He, foreseeing what vexation  
 Afric's sons would undergo,  
 Fix'd their Tyrant's habitation  
 Where his whirlwinds answer—No!

By our blood in Afric wasted,  
 Ere our necks received the chain—  
 By the mis'ries which we tasted  
 Crossing in your barks the main—  
 By our sufferings since ye brought us  
 To the man-degrading mart,  
 All sustain'd with patience, taught us  
 Only, by a broken heart—

Deem our nation brutes no longer,  
 Till some reason you shall find  
 Worthier of regard, and stronger  
 Than the colour of our kind.  
 Slaves to gold, whose sordid dealings  
 Tarnish all your boasted pow'rs,  
 Prove that you have human feelings  
 Ere you proudly question ours.

The distresses which the inhabitants of Guinea experience at the loss of their children, which are stolen from them by the persons employed in that barbarous traffic, is perhaps more thoroughly felt than described. But as





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it is a subject to which every person has not attended, the following is an attempt to represent the anguish of a mother, whose son and daughter were taken from her by a ship's crew belonging to a country where the GOD of JUSTICE AND MERCY is owned and worshipped.

"HELP! Oh, help! thou God of Christians!  
Save a mother from despair!  
Cruel white men steal my children,  
God of Christians! hear my prayer.

From my arms by force they're rended,  
Sailors drag them to the sea—  
Yonder ship at anchor riding,  
Swift will carry them away.

There my son lies pale and bleeding;  
Fast with thongs his hands are bound.  
See the tyrants, how they scourge him;  
See his sides a reeking wound.

See his little sister by him,  
Quaking, trembling, how she lies!  
Drops of blood her face besprinkle—  
Tears of anguish fill her eyes.

Now they tear her brother from her—  
Down below the deck he's thrown:  
Stiff with beating--through fear silent,  
Save a single death-like groan.

Hear the little daughter begging,  
"Take me, white men, for your own:  
Spare! Oh, spare my darling brother!  
He's my mother's only son."

See upon the shore she's raving:  
Down she falls upon the sands---  
Now she tears her flesh with madness,  
Now she prays with lifted hands.

"I am young, and strong, and hardy,  
He's a sick and feeble boy---  
Take me, whip me, chain me, starve me,  
All my life I'll toil with joy.

Christians, who's the God you worship?  
Is he cruel, fierce, or good?  
Does he take delight in mercy?  
Or in spilling human blood?

Ah! my poor distracted mother!  
Hear her scream upon the shore"—  
Down the savage captain struck her,  
Lifeless on the vessel's floor.

Up his sails he quickly hoisted,  
 To the ocean bent his way;  
 Headlong plunged the raving mother,  
 From a rock into the sea.

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THE NEGRO BOY.

An African Prince on arriving in England, being asked what he had given for his watch, answered, "What I never will again: I gave a fine Boy for it."

When avarice enslaves the mind,  
 And selfish views alone bear sway,  
 Man turns a savage to his kind,  
 And blood and rapine mark his way:  
 Alas! for this poor simple toy  
 I sold a blooming Negro Boy.

His father's hope, his mother's pride,  
 Though black yet comely to the view;  
 I tore him helpless from their side,  
 And gave him to a ruffian crew;  
 To fiends that Afric's coast annoy  
 I sold the blooming Negro Boy.

From country, friends, and parents torn,  
 His tender limbs in chains confin'd,  
 I saw him o'er the billows borne,  
 And mark'd his agony of mind:  
 But still to gain this simple toy,  
 I gave away the Negro Boy.

His wretched parents long shall mourn,  
 Shall long explore the distant main,  
 In hope to see the youth return,  
 But all their hopes and sighs are vain;  
 They never shall the sight enjoy  
 Of their lamented Negro Boy.

Beneath a tyrant's harsh command,  
 He wears away his youthful prime;  
 Far distant from his native land,  
 A stranger in a foreign clime:  
 No pleasing thoughts his mind employ,  
 A poor dejected Negro Boy.

But he who walks upon the wind,  
 Whose voice in thunder's heard on high;  
 Who doth the raging tempest bind,  
 Or wing the lightning through the sky,  
 In his own time will sure destroy  
 The oppressors of the Negro Boy.

## THE NEGRO'S PRAYER.

The following Prayer was penned by a Black Man, a slave, in the lower part of Virginia, and was presented by him to his master, which struck him with admiration and surprise, as he acknowledged to a Friend. Written in 1790.

LORD, if thou dost with equal eye  
See all the sons of Adam die ;  
Why dost thou hide thy face from slaves ?  
Consign'd by fate to serve the knaves.

Stolen or sold in Africa,  
Imported to America,  
Like hogs and sheep in market sold,  
To stem the heat and brook the cold,

To work all day, and half the night,  
And rise before the morning light ;  
Sustain the lash, endure the pain,  
Expos'd to storms of snow and rain.

Pinch'd both with hunger and with cold,  
And if we beg, to meet a scold :  
And after all the tedious round  
At night to stretch upon the ground.

Has Heaven decreed that negroes must  
By cruel men be ever curs'd ;  
Forever drag the galling chain,  
And ne'er enjoy themselves again ?

When will Jehovah hear our cries ?  
When will the sun of freedom rise ?  
When will a Moses for us stand,  
And free us all from Pharaoh's hand ?

What though our skin be black as jet,  
Our hair be curl'd, our noses flat,  
Must we for this no freedom have,  
Until we find it in the grave ?



THE END.

C2  
1829

Equiano, Olaudah.

# Juvenile Books,

*Published by Samuel Wood & Sons,*  
New York.

Rural Scenes,  
Infant's Cabinet,  
Choice Emblems,  
Hedge of Thorns,  
Alexander Selkirk,  
Rational Dame,  
Daisy,  
Alice, the Negro Girl,  
New York Cries,  
Divine Songs,  
Garden Amusements,  
English History in Miniature,  
Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa,  
Rose Bush,  
Giddy Gertrude,  
Esop's Fables,  
School of Good Manners,  
Way to Wealth,  
Original Hymns,  
Olio,  
Decoy,

&c. &c. &c.