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*Title:* The Guinea Voyage

*Date of first publication:* 1807

*Author:* James Field Stanfield (1749-1824)

*Date first posted:* Oct. 8, 2014

*Date last updated:* Oct. 8, 2014

Faded Page eBook #20141032

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THE  
GUINEA  
VOYAGE,

A Poem,  
IN THREE BOOKS.



INSCRIBED TO  
SIR RALPH MILBANKE,



*TO WHICH ARE ADDED,*  
OBSERVATIONS ON A  
VOYAGE

TO THE  
*COAST OF AFRICA,*

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS TO  
THOMAS CLARKSON, A. M.



BY JAMES FIELD STANFIELD,  
*FORMERLY A MARINER IN THE AFRICAN  
TRADE.*



**Edinburgh,**



PRINTED BY J. ROBERTSON, FOR THE  
AUTHOR, AND SOLD BY  
VERNOR HOOD & SHARP, BOOKSELLERS,  
LONDON;  
AND THE PRINCIPAL BOOKSELLERS IN  
ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND.



1807.

TO SIR RALPH MILBANKE, BART.

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR THE COUNTY OF DURHAM.

SIR,

FROM personal respect and attachment, as well as from a long and perfect knowledge of your sentiments with regard to the subject of these Verses and Observations, I should, naturally, have been led to the gratification of inscribing them with your name.—Yet, when I consider, that you had the happiness to second that Motion, which, like the impression of an oracle, has given the death-stroke to the disgraceful and nefarious Traffic, I have the satisfaction to find, that propriety, in this instance, is linked with estimation; and, that the convictions of the understanding have, sometimes, the felicity of being associated with the sensibilities of the heart.

I am,

SIR,

With warm sentiments of  
respect,

Your most obedient,

Humble servant,

*J. F. STANFIELD.*

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**PREFACE.**

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**I**T may not be improper to observe, that this Poem was originally offered, as an humble mite from the author, towards the contributions, then collecting, for the purpose of effecting the Abolition of the Slave-Trade. It was, however, thought, that, as a witness of the enormities of that Traffic, his personal evidence might be of more use to the cause than could be produced by any work of imagination: he, therefore, twice attended in that capacity.

The substance of the “Observations” was intended to be attached to the Poem, as a set of proofs and explanations. But it was decided by those who had given their time and talents to the subject, that the prose account, substantiated by an affidavit, should precede the verses. When, therefore, at a subsequent

period, the Poem was about to be published, wanting the aid of the explanatory prose, it was thought proper by the friends, whose kindness in the absence of the author, looked over the publication and its corrections, to bring the work down, in some measure to the level of plain, prosaic comprehension. In the present edition, something has been done to bring the verses nearer to the first intention.

It may be right to add, that, instead of changing the form of the “Letters” it was suggested as best to leave them in their original state, *as a faithful picture of what was once the practice of the Trade*. And, in the hope, that this may be the last local and temporary representation of the horrors of the abominable Traffic, the writer cannot resist the opportunity of saying, that he feels more gratifying and solid satisfaction than he has ever before experienced, or, perhaps, than ever can again occur to him.

# ARGUMENT OF THE FIRST BOOK.

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*Subject and invocation.—The outfit of a Guinea Voyage.—  
Allurements and artifices to collect a crew.—Story of Russel.  
—Parting of Friends.—Outward passage by Madeira and the  
Canary Islands.—Tyranny of the Master, &c.—Apostrophe to  
British seamen.*

THE

# GUINEA VOYAGE.

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## BOOK THE FIRST.

THE direful Voyage to Guinea's sultry shore,  
And Afric's wrongs, indignant Muse! deplore.  
Or will the Muse the opprobrious theme disdain—  
And start abhorrent from the unhallowed strain?  
How blast the bard whom happier themes inspire,  
Who wakes with kindred lays his melting lyre;  
Whose soothing tones by sympathy impart,  
Joy's glad emotions to the feeling heart!  
But mine be such dread notes as fiercely pour  
The shrieks of anguish on the midnight hour!  
Be mine the broken strain, the fearful sound,  
That wildly winds the howling death-song round!

Come then, celestial Muse! with Sybil-bough,  
Lead thro' the horrors these scenes of woe:  
Support the fainting weakness that recoils  
At well-known grief's, at long-supported toils:  
Extend thine hand where threat'ning gulphs are spread;  
Lift thy broad shield where storms beat round the head:  
Illume the dreary waste—inspire the lay—  
Guide feeble pow'rs along the arduous way:  
Assist to paint the melancholy view,  
The dismal, the disgraceful track pursue,  
And with the Eagle-eye of Truth pervade



All the dark mazes of th' *inhuman trade*.

Whilst awful pause marks the advancing ill,  
Whose gathering horrors the scar'd fancy fill,  
Like *Afric's* own *Tornado*,—must its rise  
Be view'd, portentous, staining *British* skies?  
Can the full storm, that blackens in its course,  
From *British* climes derive its fated source?  
From *British* climes, alas! the Demon springs,  
On whose polluted form and horrid wings  
Hangs, of dire Slavery, the collected store,  
Which, hapless *Afric*, on thy injur'd shore  
Shall, in its fulness of destruction, fall,  
Outraging, desolating, whelming all!

At length th' unfeeling colleagues close combine,  
And midnight council broods the black design;  
Strikes the first link of the tremend'ous chain,  
Whose motion vibrates thro' the realms of pain.  
Th' insatiate thirst of av'rice to supply,  
Or fill the pomp of fancy's changing eye;  
For vice, intemp'rance, passion, to provide,  
To dress up folly, or to pamper pride,  
Th' infernal *traffic's* plann'd. Now busy care  
Furrows each face, and clamours rend the air.  
The sounding anvil shakes the distant main,  
Forging with pond'rous strokes th' accursed chain.

The' attractive *Outfit* claims each bustling hand:  
Confusion works, and uproar gives command.

Th' undaunted souls, whose manly bosoms dare  
The tempest's fury, or the nation's war,  
Whose unsuspecting hearts no dangers scan,  
Fall the first victims of th' enormous plan.  
Round them, nefarious agents spread the wing,  
And o'er unconscious youth their poisons fling.  
Polluted dens of infamy they throng,  
With painted vice, to raise the Syren-song;  
With specious arts subdue th' unwary mind,  
Close their limed web, their feeble victims bind.  
Fictitious debts, false oaths, undue arrests,  
Crowd the wrong'd prison with illegal guests.  
Immur'd from friendship's aid, unnerv'd by grief,  
Hopeless of justice—no disclos'd relief.—  
One only portal opes the gloomy road;  
One dire condition bursts the drear abode.  
*Slav'ry's* dark genius heaves the iron door,  
And, grinning ghastly, points to *Guinea's* shore—  
Some few, the voluntary woe embrace,  
Sore from false friends, or undeserv'd disgrace;  
Subdu'd by pow'r, by fell misfortune worn,  
Or by the pangs of hopeless passion torn;  
Weary of griefs no patience can endure,

They seek the *Lethe* of a mortal cure.

Such, *Russel*—lov'd companion, faithful friend!  
Such were thy motives, such thy purpos'd end.  
Thy harmless spirit—gentlest of thy kind,  
Was ne'er to savage cruelty inclin'd.  
Long might rejoicing *Afric* see her sons  
Crowd freedom's plains, beneath their native thrones;  
E're thy meek hand—in virtue only brave,  
Had fix'd one fetter on the prostrate slave!

Far other feelings his mild soul imprest;  
Far other ardours shook his hopeless breast.  
With purest passion long his bosom beat,  
Its rise propitious, and its progress sweet.  
Returning love diffus'd the nameless charm,  
And met his hopes, in virgin blushes warm.  
In mutual confidence and fondness blest,  
Nor guilt alarm'd, nor fear disturb'd the breast.  
But eyes parental, film'd with doubtful hue,  
(That with inverted glass youth's prospects view,)  
Mark'd the soft transports of their chaste delight,  
And peevish envy sicken'd at the fight.  
With keen infliction giv'n, the stern command  
Cut with relentless stroke the tender band.  
The pious maid, with dutious, fearful smart,  
Tore the fond lover from her trembling heart.

Despairing, doating—with distracted mien—  
He flew the spot, and chang'd the heav'nly scene;  
Rush'd to the rigours of the frozen pole,  
To quench the conflicts of his fervid soul:  
His fervid griefs the frozen aid deny,  
And brave the winter of an arctic sky;  
Thence by the winds and fiercer passions blown,  
He tries the ardours of the flaming zone.  
Seeking with hopeless agony to find  
Extremes like those, which shook his tortur'd mind;  
From cold Despair's keen night and icy sway,  
To all the scorplings of Love's burning ray.

See o'er the glossy wave the vessel skim,  
In swelling garments proud, and gayest trim,  
Glitt'ring in streamers, deck'd in painted guile,  
Cov'ring the latent bane with specious smile,  
In shining colours, splendidly array'd,  
Assume the honours of an *honest trade*,  
And hide, beneath a prostituted glare,  
The poison'd purpose, and the' insidious snare.

Beguil'd, the crew now raise the' associate strain,  
And the last drops from pleasure's goblet drain.  
The gloomy *master* views with looks malign  
Their short-liv'd mirth, and hugs the black design—  
Feeds his dark rancour with the foul alloy—

How soon the impending fate will damn their joy.

So when primeval bliss through *Eden* stream'd  
And young-ey'd innocence on pleasure beam'd,  
With heedless joy the unsuspecting pair,  
Revell'd in guiltless rapture, void of care.  
Stung with the sight, the soul-ensnaring fiend,  
*Slav'ry's first author*, with fell rancour grinn'd;  
Fermenting envy swell'd the villain-thought—  
How soon his kindred mates, with malice fraught,  
*Sin, Pain, and Death*, would throw their shades between,  
And blast with horror the delightful scene,  
Change the lov'd converse and th' enchanting air,  
To shrieks of woe and howlings of despair!  
Now tost beneath the vessel's ample side,  
The last boat lingers on the breaking tide.  
The bending deck receives the parting crowd;  
And shades of sorrow ev'ry face o'ercloud;  
Associates, friends, compress the burning hand;  
In pale dejection weeping maidens stand—  
Presageful, eye the liquid, wild abyss,  
And wet with tender tears the trembling kiss;  
Sink from the nerveless arm, in lost dismay,  
As the dread signal speeds the boat away.  
Three soul-expanding shouts the skies divide;  
Three wild, responsive cheers re-echo wide—

The sweet vibrations tremble on the ear,  
The last delightful sounds they'll ever hear!  
And now the refluent boat evades the sight,  
High-mounting waves the vessels disunite.  
Still the white signal, fading, strains the eyes,  
Still the lorn lover with his hand replies;  
Till melting into air—the object lost—  
And duty sternly calling to his post,  
'Twixt him and joy th' eternal curtain's drawn,  
No more of bliss to know returning dawn.

Swift from the breezy north, assisting gales  
Impel the course, and swell the yielding sails.  
Before the sightless breeze the vessel flies,  
Clambers the mountain sea, and braves the skies;  
Or thund'ring down the depths that foam below,  
Ploughs up the surging brine with dashing prow.  
The rattling cordage whirls, the sail-yards strain,  
The winding pipe re-echoes o'er the main:  
Firm in their stations, ply th' obedient crowd,  
Trim the directing lines, and strain the shroud;  
Tug at the beating sheets with sinew'd force,  
And give the vast machine its steady course.

Now, all that meets the vainly straining eye,  
Is boundless ocean and unmeasur'd sky.  
Unless perchance, beyond the wat'ry trace,

*Iberia's* purple hills th' horizon grace,  
Or on the right, with a whole vintage red,  
Storm-beat *Madeira* waves her woody head.

Still o'er the pathless waste, with rapid force,  
Led by th' encreasing ray, we urge the course.  
Surrounding dolphins gambol o'er the tide,  
And deck the blue-green wave with silver pride:  
Swift from the beautiful tyrant, the weak fry  
Forsake the flood, and arid ether try,  
Spread the moist wing—attempt th' untoward height,  
And in short soarings urge their trembling flight.  
The breathing porpus cleaves his pond'rous way,  
The flouncing skipjacks bound in liquid play;  
Bonitoes court the spray on either side,  
And Albicores in shining mazes glide:  
While huge Leviathan, in monarch mood,  
Spooms, like an island, thro' the subject flood.

At length assisted by the boreal breeze,  
And southward urg'd by swift-pursuing seas,  
Close in our liquid path blue mountains rise,  
Lifting their misty summits to the skies;  
The clust'ring isles, (once Fortune's own domain)  
That break the surges of th' *Atlantic* main.  
High on our left, rear'd by volcanic fires,  
Shading all ocean, *Teneriffe* aspires;

Above the topmost clouds, with giant might,  
Heaves his *Promethean* peak to seize the light;  
And thro' conducting veins, with chemic pow'r,  
Recruits exhausted nature's fiery store.

While from the West ambrosial scents exhale,  
As *Palma* shakes her orchards to the gale.

Up from the rocky beach the clusters run,  
And spread their purple ripeness to the sun.

The varied scenes we pass with luckless speed,  
The fleeting beauties rapidly recede.

For, from the mazy chambers of the sky,  
Loos'd by chill *Boreas*, all the breezes fly;  
From the bright pole with force gigantic hurl'd,  
Urge the swift passage through the wat'ry world.

Unconscious winds, why waft your speeding gales?  
Why breath your influence on the ruffian sails?

Is it yon ensign, waving high in air,  
With *British* crimson dy'd, that claims your care?

Alas! unconscious winds—yon waving red,  
With *British* honours so profanely spread,  
Is not the hallow'd standard, whose high fame  
Leads *Albion's* sons to deeds of proud acclaim;  
Is not the flag, with whose protecting sway  
Commerce exulting sweeps the wat'ry way.  
Beneath that specious banner, the dark pow'r



Of savage rigour ripens ev'ry hour:  
The bloating poison swells the feeble bound,  
And bursting throws the rankled venom round.

Now ruthless Tyranny triumphant reigns,  
Of Hope's sweet glow no soothing ray remains.  
Far from fair Freedom's blissful regions thrown,  
The abject sufferers heave th' unheeded groan.  
At ev'ry movement of th' imperious brow,  
Beneath rude hands, the hapless wretches bow.  
Should the keen glance mark indignation's eye,  
Struck to the deck, the prostrate victims lie:  
Or to the shrouds ingloriously bound,  
They feel the lash in many a smarting wound.  
Nor dares resentment lift th' avenging hand—  
With sinking spirits, and a frame unmann'd—  
For, now (the meal in stinted boon supply'd,  
And cheering bev'rage purposely deny'd.)  
The vital current flags—the sinews faint,  
Th' exhausted voice scarce breathes the weak complaint:  
A torpid languor seizes ev'ry vein,  
And the soul sinks beneath th' oppressive chain.

Ye sons of *Britain*, who, in dangers brave,  
Dare all the tumults of th' uncertain wave;  
Whose dauntless minds alike with ardour glow,  
To waft fair commerce, or to meet the foe;

O shun the fatal course—whose sordid trace  
Leads not to glory; but with foul disgrace  
Stains the bright honours of a nation's fame,  
And sullies all the splendours of her name!  
O view with heedful glance the dismal scene,  
Reflected faithful from remembrance keen—  
Behold the fervour of the torrid ray  
Fiercely consume each active pow'r away.  
That lofty spirit, which in freedom's course  
Urg'd its bold way with independent force,  
Struck by th' enfeebling clime, and fiercer sway  
Of tyrant power, sinks in faint dismay—  
The first, devoted victim, awful falls,  
As outrag'd Nature on stern vengeance calls.

END OF THE FIRST BOOK.

## ARGUMENT OF THE SECOND BOOK.

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*The Guardian Genius of Africa calls a council of the other presiding powers—describes to them the miseries occasioned by European visitors—and proposes to each of them, in his department, to rouse the different demons of the climate, and arm them to punish the invaders on board the approaching vessel.—The morbidic plagues crowd to the vindictive standard, and, taking Death for their leader, stand embattled on the shore.—The vessel arrives and anchors.—Native agents are allured, and go out on the business of the voyage.—Slaves are brought down to the vessel—are examined—purchased—put on board—and confined below.—Death, at the head of his legions, beholds the scene.—Dispatches Cruelty from the ranks to take possession of the master's heart.—Effects of this union on the crew.—The whole pestiferous body advance to the attack.—Progress of the sickness among the crew.—Death of Russel.—The contagion spreads.—Dishonours of the dead.—Address to the British senate.*

# GUINEA VOYAGE.



## BOOK THE SECOND.

HIGH, where primeval forests shade the land,  
From the green turf, rear'd by no mortal hand,  
A sacred station lifts its fragrant seat  
O'er the loud stream, that murmurs at its feet,  
Of *Niger*, rushing thro' the fertile plains,  
Swell'd by the cataracts of tropic rains,  
Long 'ere surcharg'd his turgid flood divides,  
To burst on ocean in three thund'ring tides.

Thither high-seated in an iv'ry car,  
Glittering with gold in many a shining star,  
By alligators drawn in dread array,  
*Afric's* sad Genius bends her awful way.  
The spicy breezes throw their sweets around;  
With pealing strains the high-arch'd woods resound:  
The glowing nymphs surround the radiant pow'r,  
And duteous lead her to the regal bow'r.  
High, over head the airy cocoa bends,  
The victor palm a virid shade extends,  
Surrounding limes their freshness throw between  
And swarthy plantains gild the glowing scene.

Amidst the splendours, that around her shone,  
Th' indignant Pow'r ascends the sylvan throne;

Th' Hesperian sun, from the descent of day,  
Beams on her front serene a languid ray.  
About her sandal'd feet—a sapient band,  
The river-gods, in awful council stand:  
Immingled gold amidst their oziers gleams,  
Each pond'rous urn with studded lustre beams.  
Presiding Dryads quit their subject woods;  
Directing Naiads leave their silver floods,  
Every bright guardian of th' extended clime,  
Graces the solemn court with port sublime.

Round the august Divan, a mournful look  
Bent the sad Queen—and brooding silence broke;  
Ire mix'd with grief convolv'd her labouring breast,  
While she the anxious Peers with grace address'd.

Ye various rulers of th' extended shores,  
Where bounteous day his brightest radiance pours;  
On whose ripe vales the fat'ning deluge flows,  
Luxuriance sits, eternal summer glows;  
Say, can ye longer brook the savage hand,  
That spreads destruction o'er the wasted land?  
Can ye resistless see the ruthless chain  
Still spread its horrors o'er th' unpeopled plain?  
Look over yonder main that shakes the shores,  
Where yon *Green-promontory's* summit soars,  
The tawny sail our surging bulwark braves,

Wafted by cruel winds, and treacherous waves;  
*Europe's* pale sons direct the barb'rous prow,  
Fraught with dire stores and instruments of woe.  
The tainted freight, with false luxurious glares  
Of dang'rous hue, the splendid bait prepares;  
Beneath the semblance of whose dazzling store  
Lurks the dire barb, that taints and thins our shore.

Say, shall these tyrants with inhuman aim  
Our hapless sons and weeping daughters claim?  
Shall we—O blind!—still aid the ruffian band,  
That stains our coast, and bares our wretched land?  
Our realms, alas! abandon'd to despair,  
Supinely sunk, the slavish shackles wear:  
Surges in vain defend the burning strand;  
In vain impervious forests fence the land.  
Our native monsters treach'rous tameness shew,  
Forget their fury, and admit the foe;  
Our rebel crocodiles their fierceness lose,  
Shrouding their treason in the gelid ooze;  
Our stingless serpents twine in gentle play,  
And harmless tygers crop the flow'ry spray;  
The recreant lion smooths his savage eye,  
While the dire spoiler stalks unheeded by.  
Fly to your sep'rate realms, ye chiefs of worth,  
And call the vengeful pow'rs of *Afric* forth;

Summon Disease, with all her ghastly brood,  
To greet these traffickers in human blood,  
Call forth the terrors of the fervid skies;  
Bid misty demons from your marshes rise;  
With congregated horrors crowd the plain—  
And drive these pallid robbers o'er the main!

An awful murmur instantly transpires—  
Th' applause, that wisdom gives, when genius fires;  
Not the vain shout the shallow rabble draws,  
But conscious judgment's well-approving pause.  
Nor with weak praise they greet the scepter'd fair,  
But speed to execute th' important care.

Now thro' the dusky air they range their flight,  
Veil'd by the cov'ring of the baleful night.  
To thousand realms the charge vindictive flies:  
In thousand realms the summon'd furies rise;  
From the dark stores of pain they dreadful arm—  
In fell array the hideous legions swarm;  
Presageful, dire, the grim battalions spread,  
And waste the brooding night in purpose dread.

Red from the foggy east the sun ascends,  
And gleams new terror on th' envenom'd fiends:  
Round their ghaunt leaders throng th' unsightly host,  
Rear the black sign, and fill th' allotted post.



In heavy columns troops *lethargic* sound,  
Flap their huge banners, throw their opiates round,  
Fierce o'er the field conflagrant squadrons bend,  
And fiery *fevers* thro' the regions send.  
While from moist clouds, brooding o'er deserts bare,  
Where *Zambre's* stagnant lake pollutes the air,  
Press frigid *agues* in th' alternate row,  
And give their chill variety to woe.

But chief—the multitude that crowds the field,  
That points the spear, and lifts the Gorgon shield,  
Breaks from the slimy marsh and swampy plains,  
Where proud *Benin* in triple bulwark reigns.  
Call'd by the zenith sun, the putrid band  
Spreads its corrosive poisons o'er the land:  
Myriads of sprites their gather'd venoms throw,  
And *acrid* arrows fly from ev'ry bow.

Rang'd in broad horror, with extended line,  
In dread battallia the grim spectres shine,  
Unnumber'd, gory standards wave around,  
And shrieks and groans (their native music) sound,  
But now, a dreadful pause—spread wide and far—  
Throws more than terror o'er the baleful war.  
Such dreadful pause shall frighted Nature feel,  
'Ere the last trump resounds th' eternal peal,  
For full in front—in shadowy greatness rear'd

Their ghastly leader, Night-born *Death* appear'd!  
They rend the wounded air with shouts abhorr'd;  
Their ruthless monarch gives th' horrific word;  
Marshals, elate, the rav'ning squadrons o'er,  
And leads his Furies to the fated shore.

And now the Bark, advancing o'er the main,  
Drags her disastrous store of guilt and pain—  
Approaches, baneful, spreads her dazzling snares,  
Her glaring instruments of woe prepares,  
To catch, malign, with many a practic'd wile,  
And all the mazes of Delusion's guile,  
The impious native, whom Corruption's hand  
Has led to desolate his injur'd land.

Wide o'er the soil dire agents wing their way  
Insatiate prowl for the devoted prey.  
Unfeeling Avarice deals the galling wound,  
Destructive hurls the flaming brand around.  
See—his fell torches spread devouring fires!  
The peaceful village in the blaze expires.  
Sunk in the terrors of their burning rage,  
Lie helpless *infancy* and feeble *age*:  
And *vigour*—flying the consuming ray,  
'Scapes—to more poignant ills the wretched prey,  
To drag, in tears, and chains his lingering day.

The harmless cultivator of the soil,  
Returning from the task of pleasing toil,  
Torn from the shelter of his kindred grounds,  
Is dragg'd to bonds, to stripes, and smarting wounds.  
Meanwhile his anxious wife, with eager eye,  
Looks on the homeward path, and evening sky.  
Children, bereft, the nightly boon require,  
And anxious call their slow-returning sire.  
Ne'er shall returning sire his children bless—  
Ne'er shall the weeping wife her husband press—  
Destruction bursting ev'ry tender band,  
Sweeps, like a deluge, thro' the hapless land!

Slow to the shores now march the fetter'd crowd,  
Tugging huge chains, or bent beneath the load.  
Torn from all kindred ties dismay'd they stand,  
While prying cruelty's insulting hand,  
Minutely vigilant, with butcher skill,  
Turns the examin'd wretch at savage will,  
And (ev'ry limb and ev'ry joint survey'd)  
Completes the practice of the brutal trade.

Now the sad purchase—Heav'ns! my pow'rs refuse,  
Tho' truth illumines, and tho' fires the muse.  
Nature recoils, and in her depths profound,  
Receives, heart-struck, the parricidal wound!  
As the wan traders pay *the price of blood*,

O'er the black prospect gathering terrors brood:  
The guardian spirits look with horror down,  
And change their song of peace to joyless groan.  
E'en the bright angel, to enrol the deed  
Sent by thron'd *Justice*,—shrouds the inverted head;  
And, as the mortal crime his fingers trace,  
Veils, with his snowy vest, his crimson'd face.

The gloomy ship, in sable terror drest  
Receives the burthen of the wretched guest;  
Torn as his bosom is, still wonder glows  
As on the vast machine attention grows.  
Wonder, commix'd with anguish, shakes his frame,  
At the strange sight his language cannot name.  
Ropes, tackles, spars and ponderous engines seem  
As racking instruments, prepar'd for him:  
And, as his doom new horrors seem t' await,  
His manly heart sinks at th' uncertain fate.  
The yawning deck now opes the dreary cell;  
Hot mists exhale in many a putrid smell.  
Loaded with chains, at length the hapless slave,  
Plung'd in the darkness of the floating cave,  
With horror sees the hatch way close his sight—  
His last hope leaves him with the parting light!

Now from the embattled pests that cloud the shore,  
And hovering wait the ripe, avenging hour,

Their icy Leader calls a blood-nurs'd fiend—  
Hell ne'er saw direr from her womb ascend!  
Perch'd on a rack he held his ruthless stand;  
A scorpion scourge wav'd in his wither'd hand;  
Snaky his locks—with eye-balls roll'd in flame;  
*Sin's* second-born, and *Cruelty* his name.

Him to the trading mast the vengeful King,  
Precursive sends, with many a venom'd sting;  
For, *here*, ere Death the slackened heart-string tears,  
Still savage Cruelty the wound prepares.

With flaggy wing th' infected air he wounds,  
'Till hovering o'er the vessel's murky bounds,  
The *master's* kindred form he cowering spies—  
Swift through the sanguin'd eye rapacious hies  
To the congenial mansion rushes prone,  
And on the willing heart erects his throne.

Then Tyranny inflam'd stalks uncontrol'd,  
And raging Furies their sharp stores unfold.  
*Pallid* or *black*—the *free* or *fetter'd* band,  
Fall undistinguish'd by the ruffian hand.  
Nor age's awe, nor sex's softness charm;  
Nor law, nor feeling, wrest the blood-steep'd arm.  
While, skill'd in ev'ry torture that can rend,  
O'er gasping heaps exults the rav'ning fiend.

Mark, how in hellish wantonness, he calls  
Yon trembling innocent—the sight appals!  
The weeping sacrifice, with nervless pace,  
Obeys the mandate—while his infant face  
The butcher seizing, with infernal hold,  
Fastens his gripe in lacerating fold;  
In his torn mouth the wounded passage finds,  
And thro' the mangled cheeks his fingers winds!

Convolv'd in pangs, that rev'rend form survey  
Beneath his country's wars and commerce grey,  
Now writhes his tortur'd frame! The scourges ply—  
And from the lash the quiv'ring morsels fly.  
Invention next, from her exhaustless stores,  
O'er the bare bones the venom'd lotion pours,  
Whose acrid salts in searching conflict dart,  
With pungent anguish bathing ev'ry, smart:  
The tortur'd fibres their last feeling strain,  
And life just vibrates on the strings of pain!  
Nor this the close: between his toothless jaws  
The furious monster the thwart iron draws—  
The poor relief to wail his fate deny'd,  
And the hot gore sent down in choaking tide,  
Unnaturally return'd with horrid force,  
Dire meal! again to throb its wasted course!

But while new tortures raise the piercing cry,

And wound with dreadful sight the wearied eye,  
Th' avenging hour arrives—in dreadful din  
The troops of wan *Disease* their march begin.  
With fervid eye they trace the fatal road  
Their agent *Cruelty* had mark'd with blood.

Now droops the head in faint dejection hung,  
Now raging thirst enflames the dry-parch'd tongue;  
In yellow films the rayless eye is set,  
With chilling dews the loaded brow is wet;  
Fierce thro' the burning roads of purple life,  
The acrid venoms rush with mortal strife,  
Their poisons thro' th' intestine mazes bear,  
The viscous linings from their channels tear;  
Pour with corroding deluge thro' the frame,  
And whelm the vitals in the liquid flame.

Th' infected air, upon her loaded wings,  
Thro' the warm ship the green contagion brings.  
Strew'd o'er the filthy deck, the fever'd lie,  
And for cool moisture raise the feeble cry;  
The pitying messmate brings the cheering draught,  
And, in the pious act, the venom'd shaft,  
Repays the charity with barb ingrate,  
And whelms the soother in the kindred fate.

Three misty suns in beamless grief arose,

And glimmer'd, *Russel*, on thy mortal woes!  
The fourth beheld th' eternal angel nigh,  
As Friendship, speechless, watch'd thy fading eye.  
While throbs convulsive thy strain'd vitals wrung,  
One only murmur trembl'd on thy tongue,  
One sov'reign accent rack'd thy parting frame—  
The reading sounds that form'd *Maria's* name!  
Th' expiring spark still glimmer'd in his eye  
As her lov'd name throb'd the deadly sigh!  
But the strong foe, with adamant hand  
Drew round his faltering voice a triple band.  
Speechless—and pale—life faintly beat his breast,  
'Till the sad sun beheld the purple west;  
Still on his pallid face—soft kindness strove,  
His lingering looks on Friendship dwelt and Love,  
And as his last pulse beat with quivering chill,  
His trembling eye-balls—*look'd Maria still!*

Nor does the flaming sword of vengeance sheath,  
Tho' the last pang be paid to victor Death.  
O'er the fall'n reliques new dishonours brood;  
Unholy fury rends the sacred shroud;  
If to the sea consign'd—the hallow'd corse  
The briny monsters seize with savage force.  
If to the fresh'ning flood the lifeless clay,  
Rank alligators seize the quiv'ring prey.



Or when, more-favour'd, on the burning land  
The kindred dust is mix'd with solemn hand,  
Fierce from his nightly watch and native wood,  
Lur'd by the distant scent of morbid blood,  
The tiger rushes by foul carnage led,  
From the fresh tomb tears up the reeking dead,  
Devours the mangled limbs—churns the chill gore,  
The last avenger of th' insulted shore!

Like the wild screaming of the midnight blast,  
'Midst the torn cordage of the shatter'd mast,  
With notes that pierce th' unwholsome welkin through,  
The shrill-blown pipe convenes the drooping crew.  
The wretched crew their o'ercharg'd bosoms smite,  
And rise to join the melancholy rite.  
With painful steps the burning deck they crowd,  
Or pensive hang upon the slacken'd shroud;  
Speechless they mark the foul presageful wave,  
That, *Russell*—parting, opes thy fluid grave!  
The jutting hatch, a sable bier, is laid,  
The pitchy pall throws a funereal shade,  
His honour'd corse in awful form dispos'd,  
Decent his clay-cold limbs—his eyelids clos'd;  
The long-lov'd ringlet once *Maria* grac'd,  
Upon his breast by holy Friendship plac'd;  
The sinking iron slung with duteous pains,

In shrouded canvass wrapt his cold remains—  
A rev'rent silence the sad prospect draws;  
The sacred liturgy, with solemn pause,  
Swells the sad sound, at whose *inverted* doom,  
Plung'd in th' abyss, he finds the liquid tomb!

Aw'd by the scene—in melancholy mood  
And dumb despair, they view the closing flood;  
The smooth impression they dejected eye—  
For, yet, soft feeling prompts the pitying sigh.  
As yet, the tender tear of sorrow's shed;  
As yet some languid honours grace the dead.  
But soon, in selfish agony anneal'd,  
Cas'd by hard woe, by fiery suffering steel'd,  
Reckless, they'll listen to the screaming smart,  
The straining groan that rends th' associate heart.  
Soon, shroudless bodies, in unseemly sort,  
Thrown, frequent, through the blood-polluted port,  
Will whiten ocean—and, unburied, threat  
The pale survivors with a kindred fate!

O ye, whose patriot wisdom still pervades,  
A nation's councils, and her vigour aids,  
Whose ceaseless vigilance—whose guardian skill  
(Earnest to fence from the encroaching ill)  
Marks where decay the time-form'd fabric bends;  
Props the huge ruin; the rent work defends:

Against misrule, corruption, wrong, provides;  
Bulwarks from evil, from disorder guides—  
Say, can ye turn from the impressive scene—  
From *Britain*, bleeding in her dearest vein?  
Can ye with negligence the ruin pass?  
Or through pale interest's distorting glass  
See the false statement, unprov'd, enforce,  
That *annual murder* is the *seaman's nurse*!

O tear the specious veil, which Avarice throws  
Before the foul deformity of woes,  
The congregated ills, the wasteful toil,  
That bares our fleets, and widows half the isle.  
Break the dire system, whose audacious boast,  
Would lift Destruction to the hallow'd post  
Of injur'd Commerce; and, with blushless aim,  
Usurp the honours of her sacred name.

END OF THE SECOND BOOK.

## ARGUMENT OF THE THIRD BOOK.

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*Benevolent example of the Quakers proposed.—The Middle Passage commences.—Night view of the slaves below.—Morning scene, when brought upon deck.—Time for messing arrives.—Some refuse sustenance, and perish.—Story of Abyeda.—Child-birth on the passage.—Address to the British ladies.—The slaves arrive in the colonies—are sold by scramble—are separated from their connexions, and landed.—Address to Divine Justice—efforts of mercy.—Mr. Fox.—Abolition of the slave trade anticipated—prophetic view of Africa after the abolition.*

THE

## GUINEA VOYAGE.

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## BOOK THE THIRD.

BLEST—ever blest, remain the gentle band!  
Whose peaceful spirits and whose Christian hand,  
Have loos'd the fetters of the captive race,  
And bade fair freedom seize oppression's place.  
*Friends* be their well-earn'd name, emphatic given,  
*Friends* to mankind, and delegates of heav'n!  
No frantic wars disgrace their mild abodes;  
Nor rigour bends, nor selfish guile corrodes;  
Nor impious oath their pure affirmance stains;  
Peace lights their gentle path, and wisdom reigns.  
Freedom, simplicity, religion's rays,  
Combin'd, restore *Astræa's* golden days.  
O would mankind the bright example view,  
Press the smooth track, the godlike aim pursue!  
Would they conjoin'd the virtuous purpose aid,  
Soon the black vitals of th' opprobrious trade  
Would fail; soon cease the blood-disfigur'd scene,  
The captive's woe, the victim's trembling mein,  
And all the ills (a lamentable train)  
That new demand the renovated strain.

The hateful purchase made—compressive stow'd,  
The floating dungeon with th' unnatural load  
Is cramm'd profane: immers'd in deadly gloom,

The shackled sufferers wait th' ambiguous doom,  
Till the bark, glutted with the purchas'd gore,  
Hoists the full sail, and quits the wasted shore.

Now from the scanty crew the goblins dire  
Avert awhile the dart: the fiends require  
A fuller carnage. On the hapless train,  
T' avenge whose wrongs they left the burning plain,  
They turn insatiate; and with recreant rage,  
On the chain'd sufferers wars atrocious wage.

Soon as umbrageous night on raven-wings  
O'er the sad freight her dewy opiates flings,  
Pack'd in close misery, the reeking crowd,  
Sweltering in chains, pollute the hot abode.  
In painful rows with studious art comprest,  
Smoking they lie, and breathe the humid pest:  
Moisten'd with gore, on the hard platform ground,  
The bare-rub'd joint soon bursts the painful bound;  
Sinks in th' obdurate plank with racking force,  
And ploughs—dire task, its agonizing course!  
Nor can they turn to an exchange of pains,  
Prest in their narrow cribs, and whelm'd with chains,  
Th' afflictive posture all relief denies,  
Recruiting sleep the squalid mansion flies,  
One long sad groan the feeble throng unite;  
One strain of anguish wastes the dismal night.

With broad'ning disk, and slow increasing ray,  
Up from old ocean climbs the orb of day.  
Then the drear hatchway morning hands disclose,  
And point the sufferers to a change of woes.

Soon as the gorged cell of dim disease  
Opes the sick passage to a quicker breeze,  
From the rank maw, belched up in morbid stream,  
The hot mist thickens in the side-long beam;  
When from the noisome cave, the drooping crowd,  
In fetter'd pairs, break through the misty cloud.  
With keen despair they eye the morning's glow,  
And curse the added day that swells their woe.  
Wet with foul damps, behold, the sad array  
Disclose their misery to th' unpitying day.  
What deep dejection presses yonder face?  
Grief's dusky shade, and sad Reflection's trace.  
His fellow—see—from orbs of blood-shot ire,  
On his pale tyrants dart th' indignant fire!

Striving with feeble force to press the grate,  
Yon struggling sufferer heaves a pond'rous weight.  
Stripes from the sounding lash, fierce drawn, succeed,  
To give the fainting trembler hapless speed.  
Alas! the sounding lash applies in vain;  
For close united by the fest'ring chain,  
His dead companion up th' untoward height,

(Struck by the mortal ministers of night)

The living victim tugs with painful throes;  
Himself, less blest, reserv'd for keener woes.

Now hot black clouds in spreading volumes rise:  
Now culinary uproar shakes the skies.  
Spread through the venom'd ship, with bustling care,  
A joyless meal the surly mates prepare.  
Marshal'd around th' unwish'd for mess they lie,  
And the strange nutriments discons'late eye.  
Sunk with dejection, some the viands spare,  
Some with keen scorn reject the profer'd fare,  
Keep the superior pride, that nerves the brave,  
Nor, free-born, taste the portion of a slave.  
Then flies the scourge, sparing nor sex her age,  
Stripe follows stripe, in boundless, brutal rage.  
Then the vile engines in the hateful cause  
Are plied relentless; in the straining jaws  
The wrenching instruments with barbarous force  
Give the detested food th' unwilling course.  
But vain are torments; fenced by deathless bounds  
Beyond the reach of chains, of racks, of wounds,  
'Midst adamantine bulwarks thron'd serene,  
Immortal *Freedom* holds superior reign;  
Smiles from the heights of his eternal tower  
On tyrant's malice, and oppression's power.



In the thick gloom of yonder pensive shade,  
Is lost *Abyeda's* wretched form display'd,  
*Abyeda*, once, among the vocal throng,  
The theme and mistress of each rural song:  
Once the blithe leader of each festive scene,  
That woke the music of the joyous green.  
Never did such a nymph her brightness lave  
Within *Formosa's* deep, translucent wave.  
O'er her smooth form grace threw her waving line,  
And beauty wandered in the rich design.

Unrivall'd long had liv'd the happy maid;  
And many a hero had her love essay'd.  
But youthful *Quam'no* was the virgin's pride;  
Her friend, protector, and her faithful guide.  
Fast by her side he kept his guardian way,  
Lest trecherous *Whites* should seize the tempting prey.  
The freshening cocoas from their height he bore,  
Clustering bananas spread their juicy store,  
The spotted spoils adorn'd her rural bow'r,  
When from the chace, in the dear ev'ning hour,  
Glowing, she met him with the welcome smile;  
Pleas'd and yet anxious at the manly toil.

And now through dewy dawn, the rising ray  
Lights up the radiance of their bridal day.  
With early nymphs within the busy room,

Amidst the labours of the flying loom,  
Of vivid tints she plies the various thread;  
The long-plann'd work, to grace the nuptial bed.  
With beating steps resounds the hollow floor;  
To rapid strokes responds the clam'rous door.  
With breathless energy she flies amain,  
To meet her *Quam'no* and the bridal train.  
Alas! no *Quam'no* meets her eager eye—  
In rush the spoilers with detested cry;  
Seize with rapacious force the trembling prey;  
And to the shore the hapless spoil convey.

When urg'd by rage or hunger's burning force,  
The rav'ning lion darts his furious course,  
And through the herd his bloody passage ploughs  
So *Quam'no* rushes through the crowd of foes,  
Carves his fierce way, entwines the fainting maid;  
With vain protection;—lo! a treach'rous blade,  
Darted behind with sure, with coward aim,  
Transfixes deep; convuls'd, the bleeding frame,  
Plunged indignant o'er the tainted ground;  
Life rolls his torrent through the yawning wound;  
O'er his fierce eyes death's hideous shadows move  
And dim, suffusion, shut out light and love.  
*Abyeda*, now upon the lifeless form,  
Sinks in despair beneath the trying storm.

The murd'rous stroke that mark'd his early tomb,  
Involves her intellects in deadly gloom.  
Her wounded reason the sad mansion flies:  
Sense men widely, and Reflection dies!

Now (scourges having long their fury spent)  
Gloomy and sad, beneath oppression bent,  
Round her gall'd neck the festering iron winds,  
And to the gloomy mast oppressive binds.  
Sad strains of feeble melancholy flow;  
Half-meaning fragments of recorded woe,  
In wild succession break the pensive lay,  
Through the drear night and lamentable day.  
Her sad associates list the melting tones,  
And join each cadence with according groans.  
But sick'ning nature with the burden reels;  
O'er her wan face the deadly jaundice steals;  
The spirits die, the nerveless limbs unstrung,  
With mortal gripe the wounded heart-strings wrung,  
Fix'd her sunk eye—her love-lorn ditty fails,  
Life beats tumultuous 'gainst the feeble pales—  
Convulsive throbs expel the final breath,  
And o'er the fatal close sits ghastly Death.

Hark! from yon lodge in many a wounding groan  
A labouring victim raise the feeble moan!  
Swift to the darksome cell the females fly,

To still the tumult of the conscious cry:  
Join the deep woe with sad combin'd exclaim;  
As pangs maternal shake her drooping frame.  
Heav'ns! what a mansion for the tender woes,  
The painful travail partial nature throws  
Upon the gentler sex—when lenient art  
And soothing care should cheer the fainting heart.  
Here, with dejected wretchedness enclos'd,  
To brutal hands and impious eyes expos'd,  
Her sacred sorrows the sad crisis press,—  
Occurrent horrors, premature distress,  
Spread with foul clouds the inauspicious ray,  
That opes the new-born victim's doleful day!

Behold her bending o'er her infant charge,  
Hear the laments her copious grief enlarge.  
“ Ill-fated innocent,” (she wailing cries)  
“ Thou joy and anguish of these aching eyes,  
“ Of parent misery the hapless heir,  
“ Thy mother gives the welcome of despair;  
“ Greet's thy unconscious smile with throbbing fears;  
“ Repays thy fondness with presageful tears.  
“ Where now the joys should light the holy bow'r?  
“ Where the sweet hopes that wing the natal hour?  
“ Nor hope's blest dawn shall e'er thy fancy warm;  
“ Nor joy's sweet smile illumine thy abject form.

“ No grateful sire hails thee with conscious pride;  
“ Thy future worth no flattering friends decide:  
“ A wretched mother press'd by tyrant fate,  
“ Can yield no succour to thy helpless state:  
“ The spoiler's chains, that load her languid frame,  
“ By spoiler's right thy fetter'd service claim.  
“ Has o'er this pallid race a mother's love  
“ E'er bent in fondness?—Could they ever prove  
“ A wife's soft transport, as she gently prest  
“ The smiling stranger to a father's breast?  
“ Ah, sure the soft remembrance would have pow'r  
“ T' atone the sex, and sooth this mournful hour!”

For ev'ry virtue fam'd, ye British fair,  
Can ye this foul reproach unheeded bear?  
O rise auspicious, lead the liberal train,  
That aims to shake oppression's iron reign.  
A nation's councils oft your pow'r obey;  
The wars of nations own your sovereign sway.  
In soft humanity's congenial course,  
Your kindling charms will claim resistless force:  
When Beauty lifts the eye in misery's cause,  
Compassion's weeping form she gently draws  
From realms where Mercy, interpos'd, suspends  
The wrath-wing'd bolts, that awful Justice sends.

Fainting, with such a course of loathsome views,

And length of horrors, the dejected Muse  
Spreads her tir'd wings, and with desponding mein,  
Weeps o'er the close of the destructive scene;  
Sees the dire bark 'midst direr regions steer;  
Hears the plung'd anchor tell grim Slavery near;  
Beholds the fell Receivers fiercely pour,  
In savage swarms, upon the blood-stain'd shore,  
Sees their abhorr'd approach—with harsher chains,  
To load (curst act!) oppression's weak remains.

Now o'er the gloomy ship, in villain guise,  
The shrouding canvass drawn, shuts out the skies.  
The pitchy curtain throws a shade unclean;  
Meet apparatus for the horrid scene.  
Marshal'd with fatal skill, in abject; bands—  
Forbearing heaven!—the *human purchase* stands.  
Now rush the trading fiends; and, with fell sway  
Fasten rapacious on the shuddering prey.  
What shrieks of terror pierce the sickening skies—  
What floods of anguish burst their wounded eyes!  
As strife tumultuous shakes the *scrambling brood*—  
*Scrambling for human flesh—for kindred blood!*

In the hoar surge now dips the bladed oar;  
The crowded boat creeps to the guilty shore.  
Then shrieking wildness raises tumult high;  
To their low friends the parted wretches cry;

With imprecating screams of horror wild,  
The frantic mother calls her sever'd child.  
One universal tumult raves around;  
From boat to ship responds the frenzied sound:  
With tenfold anguish bursts before the throne,  
Where *Justice* sits, and calls the thunder down.

Immortal Power! in whose impartial gaze,  
Nor clime, nor realm can vain distinction raise;  
No worm-rais'd station thy attention draws,  
Nor tinctur'd skin contracts thy ample laws;  
But, to thy bounteous eye, the extended frame  
Of ranks and nations brings the equal claim!  
How long wilt thou ascending cries withstand?  
How long the red-bolt press thy lifted hand?  
Or dost thou, rather, from the horrid scene  
Turn thy relenting eye to the soft mein  
Of prostrate Mercy, who with powerful tears,  
Arrests thy wrath, and the drear prospect clears.

Ah, yes, Humanity resumes her stand;  
Her raptur'd eye pervades th' increasing band;  
Views frowning Interest, with averted face  
Yield to Conviction the reluctant place;  
Beholds new champions join the glorious few,  
Whose well-tried efforts meet her grateful view—  
The *glorious few*—who midst conflicting storms

And all the outrage busy Avarice forms,  
Unshaken stood, each mighty chief an host,  
And fix'd, and still defend the sacred post.

Such, 'midst your foremost ranks, once soar'd sublime,  
(Too soon, alas! snatch'd by unsparing time)  
The man, whose genius, as a potent charm,  
Could animate the dull, make prudence warm.  
Bending the powers of his capacious soul,  
Skill'd in each part, and ample in the whole,  
He, in his liberal, comprehensive mind,  
The mazy system, with a glance, combin'd:  
And, arm'd by Mercy with a Nation's power,  
Struck the dire Demon in his savage tower:  
Breath'd the high fiat—angers the final doom,  
That sinks the Monster to his murky tomb.

This the proud legacy, by wisdom given,  
Stamp'd by conviction, and enroll'd in heaven.  
The high behest awaken'd senates hail,  
And waft their sanction on each spreading gale.  
*Afric's* reviving Genius grateful bends,  
And greets the boon th' enlighten'd Empire sends.

The sacred delegates from freedom's throne  
Through the glad soil speed the commission'd boon.  
Quick through the joyful land the tidings ring;



Rejoicing crowds th' enfranchis'd blessing sing.  
Science awaken'd leads the free-born strain;  
And arts and commerce join the liberal train.  
Rear'd by protecting laws new cities rise,  
And heave their turrets to the lucid skies.  
Trade lifts his trident o'er the silver tide,  
New harbours opens, bids his navies ride;  
Sees, unpolluted by oppression's hand,  
His honest wealth stream through the joyous land;  
His crowded quays heap'd with the guiltless toil,  
Iv'ry and gold in many a burnish'd pile,  
Drugs, spices, gums, in rich profusion thrown,  
And all the treasures of the genial zone.  
Culture emergent o'er the damask'd plains  
Spreads her rich vest, and gaudy Flora reigns.  
Where marshes once display'd their sickly green,  
Health lifts her roseate face, and points serene  
The cot, where mild Content with conscious grace  
Smiles on her husband Labour's glowing face.  
Pierc'd by no suns, th' interminable wood,  
Whose pathless gloom screen'd horror's drear abode,  
Opes its long vistas to the cheerful loves:  
And nymphs and sylvans in the scented groves  
(Where demons us'd to haunt the thorny shade)  
Assemble blithe, and sweep th' unfolded glade.

In freedom's train, the ever-formost band,  
The jocund muses skim the happy land.  
Sweet *Poesy* precedes the virgin quire  
Calls inspiration with her sounding lyre:  
Gives to awaken'd verse th' auspicious morn,  
Whose mid-day fire shall quicken bards unborn.

In the full suffrage of immortal strains  
The future *Hayley* of these solar plains,  
Warm'd by the theme, will shake the tuneful shores,  
From Gambia's flood to mild Angola's bow'rs.  
His heav'n-born lay will fire th' enraptur'd throng,  
While neighb'ring realms hang o'er the sacred song,  
That sings, How wafted from the genial isle,  
Whose silver cliffs on circling ocean smile,  
Loose-vested *Liberty*, by *Mercy* led,  
Broke the huge chain, press'd *Slav'ry's* miscreant head,  
Bad rescu'd Nature claim her birth-right boast;  
And *British* freedom smile on *Afric's* coast.

FINIS.

OBSERVATIONS  
ON A  
GUINEA VOYAGE.

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LETTER I.

SIR,

HAVING had the dishonour to be employed in the Slave-Trade, and having been for some time resident in a factory up the country, observations and facts have occurred, that may add a little to the mass of materials, your humanity has been at such labour to collect; and which has already thrown so much light on a traffic, that from its commencement to its close, is marked with a rapacity and oppression, unequalled in any, the most horrid process of individual or collective guilt, that has stained the page of history. The epistolary form will be an apt medium for a few observations, where there is no time for a logical arrangement, and my addressing of them to a Gentleman, to whose energy and elucidations the cause is so much indebted, will be allowed the claim of propriety at least, and I hope will meet with your excuse. Without taking up your time by a longer preface, I will hasten to my remarks, commencing with as early a stage of the bussiness as possible, so that they may, as far as circumstances will allow, connect the whole round of a GUINEA VOYAGE.

I have been the readier to take up my pen, when I consider the impenetrable veil that has been thrown over this traffic for such

a number of years. Its principle, its process, and its effects, have been with-held from the public eye by every effort that interest, ingenuity, and influence, could devise. It would be but a natural question in this place, were it asked, How it is possible that a trade, which has been carried on so long, and in such an open manner, whose effects are every day before us, and to continue, which such a number of people are employed, can be marked with such uncommon circumstances of cruelty, injustice, murder, and oppression, as have been usually laid to its charge?

That the remark is specious, I do not mean to deny; and many, I fear, have too hastily made up their minds on the subject from this consideration alone. But let me also ask a question or two in return. From whom is it expected that this information should be derived? Who are the persons qualified to produce the authentic evidence? Will the merciful slave-merchant step forward, and give up the long catalogue of rapacity, murder, and destruction, his own avarice has framed; Will the humane Guinea-Captain produce his fatal muster-roll,—and for once impelled by justice, change that *useful* disease,—*Flux, Flux, Flux*, which has hitherto so conveniently masked the death-list of his devoted crew, to the *real*, the mortal causes, that have thinned his ship? Will petty officers, bravely despising all thoughts of preferment, disregarding the opinion of owners and agents, and nobly resolving to pass their lives in labour, wretchedness, and servile dependance—will they disclose the horrid scenes they have been witnesses to—the barbarities they have seen practised, and the cruelties, of which, they themselves have been, perhaps, the unwilling instruments? And yet we have information on the subject: information in newspapers, in pamphlets, in coffee-houses, and on 'change; on the warrantable, the political, the humane process of the Slave-Trade. Heavens!—Through *what* channels must flow the sullied accounts that are

thus thrown before us? Through the self interested affirmations of *Traders*; through *Captains*, whose continuance in the employ depends on their open attachment and defence of the proceedings of their owners; through *Captains*, I say, who hope to be Traders, and through *Mates*, who hope to be Captains.

Why those, who through inclination, and having no favour to purchase, nor interest to support, and who might be supposed to give the truth in plain, unbiassed information, are not produced in such multitudes as our adversaries demand, I shall endeavour to prove impossible, from the nature of the trade, and the unremitting pains taken to prevent their returning to the port from which they sailed.

For this purpose, I must pass over all the destruction and barbarity of the voyage, and meet the few meagre survivors on their arrival in the West-Indies. Here they are bound by their articles<sup>[1]</sup>, to receive half their wages in the currency of the island. This is a two-fold grievance. They are robbed of as much hardly-earned money, as makes the difference between currency and sterling, which is far from being an inconsiderable loss. But there is a farther mischief attendant on this injustice. Imagine to yourself, Sir, a poor worn-out wretch, after the miseries and sickness of a *slaving voyage*—after a long want of every cheering beverage—now first set ashore—his own master—among people of his own colour and language—with money in his pocket, and temptations to excess on every side: picture this—and for a moment recollect the unsuspecting, thoughtless, dissipated propensity that marks the character of a British sailor, and must you not conclude the consequence as unavoidable—that the feeble remains left, by the cruelty and disease of an *African voyage*, are speedily sacrificed by West Indian intemperance?

From death and desertion, *thus encouraged*, few escape. I went out in a certain vessel; the crew consisted of thirty-two or upwards; she was designed to be left on the coast as a floating factory. A fresh ship of 300 tons, was sent out to bring off the purchase to the West Indies, with a crew to replace our dead. The captain of the latter, and a few to make trade were left on the coast; the rest embarked with us for the West Indies—of the two crews, there came home but the captain, the carpenter, and myself.

By such means, they get rid of those who might call them to an account for their barbarities—and the money due to those, whom they have obliged to desert, is saved to their owners. The mortality, usually ascribed to a Guinea voyage, stops or lessens the proper inquiries about the fate of the crew. Besides, improvident, heedless sailors, seldom give their friends a line of advice, relative to the port they sail from, or on what particular voyage they are bound; especially a voyage that is held in so much dishonour and contempt. Though I remained a long time in Liverpool, after our arrival, there were inquiries but after four persons out of the two crews above mentioned, and one of those was from Falmouth, and the other from the farther part of Wales. And I am convinced, (for I managed all their little accounts) that of the first crew, officers excepted, not one of them had sent their friends the smallest account of their destination. Thus, silently, does the nation lose her most useful subjects: and in this manner is the public deprived of an impartial channel of information, and of the means of developing a system of iniquity, from the flimsy web, in which it has so long been veiled by sophistry and misrepresentation.

[1] The practice of Liverpool, the only port I sailed from in that employ.

## LETTER II.

IT has been asserted, that the Slave Trade is a desirable employ, and a nursery for our seamen.

Were this the case, sailors would be found as willing to offer themselves to this, as to any other traffic. But the direct contrary is the fact. Nothing is more difficult than to procure a sufficient number of hands for a Guinea voyage.

To collect a crew for this purpose, there are public houses, under the influence, and in the pay of the merchants; every allurements and artifice is held out to entice them into these infamous dens. Festivity and music lay hold of the deluded senses; prostitution throws in a fascinating spell with too much success; and intoxication generally gives the business its fatal period.

In these houses, every temptation to run into debt is most studiously offered; this, with an unthinking sailor, is easily brought about: and when once that wheel is set in motion, it is soon accelerated to the wretched point which was aimed at. When the debt is sufficient for the purpose, a Guinea ship is offered, sometimes through the medium of the inexorable hostess, and frequently by one of those numerous agents on that business, who, under the mask of pity or sudden friendship, win the attention and confidence of the unsuspecting victim. If this be refused, he is thrown into prison, which fixes him their own; for, from that place, other vessels will scarcely engage him; ships in every other employ find seamen willing enough to *offer* their services: and the Captains of these have a natural objection to what they call *jail-birds*.

These houses are kept in continual operation. But, at the

immediate time of an outfit, every exertion and contrivance is used. Merchants, Clerks, Captains, and others, prowl about without intermission. They lay hold of every sailor they meet, and without ceremony, hurry him into some scene of intoxication. I have been dragged into houses three times, in the course of one street, myself: nay, I have known many seamen, who fancied themselves cunning enough to evade these practices, go with the crimps to some of their houses, boasting that they would cheat the Merchant out of a night's merriment, and firmly resolved to oppose every artifice that could be offered; yet have they, in their state of drunkenness, signed articles with the very men, whose purposes they were aware of, and have been plunged into a situation, of which they had known the horrors.

In Liverpool—and I understand that the same practice prevails at Bristol—when they have signed articles, they get a note for their advance-money, not payable till they are out at sea, and till a list of the crew is brought back by the pilot. Now, to negotiate this bill, which is to pay their debts, and to furnish themselves with a few clothes, and a little modicum of liquor, they are obliged to make a will, and power of attorney, in favour of their rapacious landlady. The third mate of the vessel I sailed in—poor *Russel!*—and myself, were obliged to give into this practice. Without any idea of debt, and far from any of those hired dens I have mentioned, but rather reputably lodged in what they called a coffee-house, we found it absolutely necessary, in order to live with any degree of ease and comfort, to make wills in favour of our landlady: it was expected as a thing of course, and was impossible to be avoided moderately. Her brewer, a man of credit, was the witness and leader of the business and seemed to consider it as an essential consequence of the voyage. It is true, we cancelled them soon by new ones: but this may



serve to shew the prevalency of the practice, and may help to exhibit to the public, the disinterested characters of that numerous body of men, women, and children, who have with such cogent arguments signed the Liverpool petition against the abolition of the Slave Trade:—those whip-cord spinners, those chain-forgers, those heirs and legatees, deriving inheritance from the cruelty, murder, and injustice of a Guinea voyage.

### LETTER III.

TILL the vessel gets clear of the channel—till there is no probability that contrary winds or inclemency of weather will drive her back into an English port, the usage of the seamen is moderate, and their allowance of provisions sufficient: in short, the conduct of the Captain and officers appears like that which is the *continual* practice in every other employ. But as soon as they are fairly out at sea, and there is no moral possibility of desertion, or application for justice, then the scene is shifted. Their ratio of provisions is shortened to the very verge of famine; their allowance of water lessened to the extreme of existence; nothing but incessant labour, a burning climate, unremitting cruelty, and every species of oppression is before them.

This no exaggerated language, nor is it the picture but of one particular case: every one I have ever spoken with, that was qualified to answer on the subject (and there should be little account made of any other) has declared that the usage was alike, with but a few exceptions. What I saw and felt myself, I have a right to declare; and I think it may be assumed as the average medium of the general conduct of the African employ;

for I have heard of very many instances of greater cruelty and destruction; and a few where the usage has been better.

We were fortunate in a leaky vessel, and bad weather: the apprehension that we should be obliged to bear away for Lisbon, kept back our misery for awhile. Flogging did not commence with us till about the latitude  $28^{\circ}$ . It was talked of long before, but was with-held by the above-mentioned consideration. It no sooner made its appearance but it spread like a contagion. Wantonness, misconception, and ignorance, inflicted it without an appearance of remorse, and without fear of being answerable for the abuse of authority. This barbarous charge to the officers I myself heard given “You are now in a Guinea ship—no seaman, though you speak harshly, must dare to give you a saucy answer—*that* is out of the question; but if they LOOK to displease you, knock them down.”

The cruel direction was soon put in practice, by one of the mates, on the cooper, a most harmless, hard-working, worthy creature. The mate knocked him down for some light answer he gave him, for the poor fellow had an innocent aim at being humourous. On his making his way to appeal to the Captain, he was knocked down again: crawling on the deck, his face covered with blood, he still persisted to make his way to the cabin, but was struck to the deck a third and a fourth time, when some of the sailors rushed between, and hurried him away.

Scarce an hour passed in any day without flogging; sometimes three were tied up together. The slightest imputation of error brought on the bitter punishment; and sometimes the smarting application of pickle was superadded.

I do not now exactly remember the allowance of bread: at first I know it was five lbs. per week, served out every Sunday (*the only circumstance that distinguished the Sabbath through*

*the whole voyage*) but it was soon lessened. This I very well remember, that many of the people had their whole week's proportion eaten up by Tuesday morning; and the daily weight of beef was so small, that though there was not water to allay the thirst it occasioned, we never dared to steep it for fear of wasting the quantity.

During the first part of the passage, our allowance of water was three pints per day: for the last month it was reduced to one quart, wine measure. A quart of water in the torrid zone!—In the calms, which are prevalent in this latitude, we were in the boat, towing, from morning till night: happy used I to think myself, though almost fainting with fatigue, if a little sweat dropped from my forehead, that I might catch it in my mouth to moisten my parched tongue. The licking the dew off the hencoops, in a morning, had been long a delicious secret; but my monopoly was at last found out, and my little refreshment laid open to numbers. Many of the men could not refrain, but in a kind of temporary distraction, drank up their whole allowance the moment they received it; and remained for the next four and twenty hours in a state of raging thirst not to be described. The doctor declared that this want of water, in such a climate, and living entirely on salt provisions, must lead to the most fatal consequences.

During this scarcity with the men, the captain, besides plenty of beer and wine, had a large tea-kettle full of water every morning, and another every evening, added to his allowance. I know there was no want in the cabin, for the third mate, who was my friend, frequently gave me a little out of his own portion.

The scarcity of water is a common case: it is owing to the vessel's being stowed so full of goods for the trade, that room

for necessities is made but a secondary consideration. The occasion of this conduct appears to me to be principally this: A certain number of slaves are to be carried to the West-Indies; but before that number can be landed there, the owners are well aware how many are likely to be marked on the dead list, for the purchase of which, there must be goods sent out, as well as for the probable number that speculation has fixed to come to market. For this reason every corner and cranny is crammed with articles of traffic; to this consideration is bent every exertion of labour and ingenuity; and the health and lives of the seamen, as of no value, have but little weight in the estimation.

Besides the inexpressible misery of wanting water in such a climate, there is another very material hardship attending this avaricious accumulation of cargo. The vessel is so crowded with goods, that the sailors have no room to sling their hammocks and bedding. Before they leave the cold latitudes they lie up and down, on chests and cables, but when they come nearer the influence of the potent sun, they sleep upon deck, exposed to all the malignity of the heavy and unwholesome dews.

The advocates for the Slave-Trade endeavour to advance, that the mortality of the seamen is entirely to be attributed to the nature of the climate—but this assertion, is founded neither in veracity nor experience. The climate comes in for its share in *heightening* the horrid scene, but it is the previously wretched situation of the poor victims that gives it that effect. I heard our doctor, an able intelligent man, declare, that if the trade, with the same concomitant circumstances, was carried on at the Canary Islands, the same mortality would be the consequence. And I am fully convinced, that if a commerce was carried on to the coast of Africa of any other kind than that of slaving, and the captains

treated their people with as much humanity as they are treated in other employes, not one of the causes of the great mortality, I have been witness to, could exist.

Among the many causes of destruction, which originate from the trade, and not from the climate, the bulk-heads between the decks, excluding a salutary circulation of air, have been insisted upon as producing these effects. But there is another which has not claimed such notice, and which yet is a terrible assistant to African mortality. This is the fabricating of an house over the vessel for the security of slaves, while on the coast.

This enclosure helps the stagnation of air, and is, in that point of view, dreadful: but it is more fatal in the act of its preparation. I know nothing more destructive than the business of cutting wood and bamboe, for the purpose of erecting and thatching this structure. The process is generally by the riverside. The faces and bodies of the poor seamen are exposed to the fervour of a burning sun, for a covering would be insupportable. They are immersed up to the waist in mud and slime; pestered by snakes, worms, and venomous reptiles; tormented by muskitoes, and a thousand assailing insects; their feet slip from under them at every stroke, and their relentless officers do not allow a moment's intermission from the painful task. This employment, the cruelty of the officers, and the inconceivably shocking task of scraping the contagious blood and filth, at every opportunity, from the places where the slaves lie, are, in my opinion, the three greatest (though by no means the sole) causes of the destruction of seamen, which this country experiences by the prosecution of the trade in slaves.

## LETTER IV.

AS I wish to meet and to answer every possible question that may be asked about this simple enumeration of facts, I find two plausible interrogations that may with no great impropriety be stated in the present place.

“How is it possible that captains should be so inattentive to their own and their employer's interests, as to sacrifice the very men who are to assist them in the main business of the voyage—or, if headlong cruelty prompts them to such a hazard, by what means is the complicated laborious business ever finished?”

Again—“If by some extraneous means the traffic is completed, who are then to take care of the slaves, and how are the vessels navigated to the different Western Colonies, to which they are bound?” Of these two queries the latter I shall reserve to a future discussion, and confine myself, at present, to the former.

There is on that part of Africa, called the Gold Coast, a race of the inhabitants, known by the name of Fantees; they are sturdy, animated, laborious, and full of courage. Many of this nation are reared from their childhood, in the European vessels that frequent the coast; they learn their languages, and are practised in all the habits of seamanship; and more especially all that relate to the business of *slaving*. Vessels on, or near their own coast, they of course assist for a stipulated hire: those that are destined for any of the trading places in the gulph of Benin, or farther down the coast, generally call here and engage a Fantee mate, boatswain, and crew, from fifteen to thirty or upwards, according to the size of the vessel. The captain enters into a written agreement with their king, which is counter-signed by the English governor, expressing the nature of their service, the amount of their wages, and an engagement not to carry any of them off to the West-Indies. To these men the trade is in a good

measure indebted for its existence. When the poor sailors fall off, these hardy natives, who have every indulgence the captains can allow them, carry on the business with a vigour and activity, of which the British seamen, from their ill usage and scanty fare, are incapable.

The manner of trading on every part of the coast differs, I dare say, in some particulars, but its general nature is pretty much the same: and as it has been so copiously handled in other publications on this subject, I shall forbear to speak on that head; reserving a liberty of animadverting on any thing that may have been but slightly handled.

I am inclined to think, that the method of collecting slaves by war, and frequent battles, dreadful as that mode may be, is by no means the great support of the Slave Trade: but that they are procured by the still more infamous and horrid practice of *kidnapping*.

In Benin, where I was employed, I am certain it was often the case. Our factory, in which I resided, was at Gatoe, many miles from the sea, in the heart of the country. I made continual enquiries, but never heard of any wars. I understood, however, from every thing I could collect, that they were seized by fraud or violence in the internal parts of the country, and so transmitted through different hands to the immediate traders upon the coast.

But to put it out of conjecture, the business was in practice every day around us. There was a lawless body of men in the kingdom of Benin, called *Joemen*; who, encouraged by the white traders, erected themselves into an independent government. Their king, a desperate fellow, was called *Badjeka*. They had no towns nor villages, but shifted suddenly, and pitched their temporary huts where they considered it to be

most opportune for their depredations. These banditti bought no slaves, but they sold multitudes. They had neither settlement nor plantations, but lived entirely by this horrid species of robbery, which, in a civilized country, like *Benin*, must have been attended every day with circumstances of cruelty and distress, beyond any thing that enthusiasm (for so the adoption of the cause of humanity is called by the cold-blooded spoilers) has ever yet imagined.

Among the islands and creeks that are numerous about the mouth of the river *Formosa*, there was also a kind of pirate admiral, distinguished by the name and title of captain *Lemma-Lemma*. This personage had a powerful fleet of war canoes, with which he made descents on all parts of the unprotected coast; he paid no taxes, but declared himself independent of the king of Benin, whose subjects he carried off for trade at every opportunity. To this man, and his exertions, we were a good deal indebted for our cargo.

Whenever we wanted to give the trade a desirable degree of celerity, the practice was, to declare that a certain number of prime commodities would be in trade till such a date, (a short one) and no longer;—or, that the vessel was to sail by such a day, and was to be replaced by no other for some time. These artifices were sure to produce the effect proposed: we had soon slaves brought down to us, in great numbers, and without the intervention of wars or battles.

It has been affirmed by those, who know nothing of the internal policy and constitution of *Guinea*, but perhaps too much of that of the West India islands, that though they allow a number of *Africans* are annually sacrificed in the act of capture, in the course of the passage, in the seasoning in the plantations, and a long *et cætera*; yet that the slavish state of the *survivors* is



infinitely preferable to that which they experienced in their own country.

The arguments drawn from the unalienable rights and principles of civil liberty, I leave in the hands of those who have time and abilities to enforce, and science to illuminate their reasonings—and, thank heaven, such have engaged in the cause of humanity! My simple observations go no further than to declare, that through the course of a seafaring life, to almost all parts of Europe, the West Indies, and North America, I never saw a happier race of people than those of the kingdom of BENIN.

The subjects of the king of Benin were, during my observations there, seated in ease and plenty. The slave trade, and its unavoidably bad effects excepted, every thing bore the appearance of friendship, tranquillity, and primitive independence. At *Gatooe* the markets were regular and well stocked: they teemed with luxuries unknown to the Europeans. Their fishermen, hunters, and husbandmen, brought in their stores and delicacies: their smiths, carpenters, weavers, and, believe me, there are such among them, displayed their curious manufactures. Fowls, fish, fresh and dried provisions, fruits of the most delicious kind, various sorts of pepper and spices, potatoes, yams, plantains, calavances, cocoa nuts, sugar-cane, purslane, calliloo, oca, palm-wine, and palm-oil, were in plenty there. These added to native coral, mats of a most curious texture, Benin and Jaboe cloths of beautiful colours, ivory, gold-dust, gums, woods, wax, cotton, and other commodities, proved to a demonstration the inexhaustible store of valuable articles, which they could substitute for the unnatural traffic in human flesh; and shewed incontestably, that they could improve their produce to a state worthy the return of British luxuries. The glare and relish of these luxuries, Sir, now grown essential to

them by use, they cannot easily forego; but if the inhuman process were abolished, they would be under the necessity, and would be desirous of meeting your exports with some more valuable and more guiltless branch of trade.

## LETTER V.

IT is unaccountable, but it is certainly true, that the moment a Guinea captain comes in sight of this shore, the Demon cruelty seems to fix his residence within him. Soon after we arrived, there came on board us a master of a vessel, who was commissioned joint factor with our captain. All that I could conceive of barbarity fell short of the stories I heard of this man. His whole delight was in giving pain.

While our captain was placing buoys and other directions on the dangerous bar of the river, for the purpose of crossing it, he used to order the men to be flogged without an imputation of the smallest crime. The steward, for serving out some red wine to a sick man, by the doctor's direction, was flogged in such a manner, as not to be able to let his shirt touch his mangled back; and after his punishment, making an attempt to explain the matter, he was ordered to the shrowds again, and the same number of lashes was repeated.

It was his common practice to call his cabin-boy to him, and without the smallest provocation, to tear his face, ears, and neck, in the most brutal manner. I have seen him thrust his fingers into his mouth, and force them against the inside of his cheek till the wound appeared on the outside of the same. He had pulled his ears so much, that they became of a monstrous size. The hind part of them was torn from the head. They had a

continual soreness and running, and were not well near a twelvemonth after his infernal tormentor's death, when he deserted from us in the West Indies. I heard many and uncommon stories of the barbarity of this monster to his own crew, but had an opportunity to see but little of him, for he lived but eleven days after he came on board us; he killed himself with our wine and beer; of which he had not tasted any for a long time before our arrival there.

At the commencement of our trade, I went up to the factory, where I continued about eight months. In the course of this time most of the crew fell the sacrifices of this horrid traffick, and its inseparable cruelties. One evening only was I on board during this period: but this was sufficient to give me a strong idea of the misery I had so happily escaped. The vessel, as Mr. Falconbridge aptly and emphatically observes, was like a slaughter-house. Blood, filth, misery, and disease. The chief mate lay dying, calling out for that comfort and assistance he had so often denied to others. He was glad to lay hold of me to bring him a little refreshment—no one else to take the smallest notice of his cries. The doctor was in the same condition, and making the same complaint. The second mate was lying on his back on the medicine-chest; his head hanging down over one end of it, his hair sweeping the deck, and clotted with the filth that was collected there; and in this unnoticed situation he died soon after I came on board.

On the poop the appearance was still more shocking—the remainder of the ship's crew stretched in the last stage of their sickness, without comfort, without refreshment, without attendance. There they lay, straining their weak voices with the most lamentable cries for a little water, and not a soul to afford them the smallest relief. And while all this horror and disease

were preying on the lives of the poor seamen, the business of purchasing, messing the slaves, and every circumstance relative to the trade, was transacting with as little interruption, and as much unconcern, as if no such people had ever been on board. I passed a night of misery with them, and got up the river with the morning's boat—another night might have sealed me among the number of the devoted crew.

To provide against this mortality, and to convey the purchase to the West Indies, (which makes the answer to the second query of my fourth letter) a fine large ship, and a fresh crew, were sent out to us. The new captain, and a few to make trade, (as I remarked before) were left behind in the factory. About five of the old crew, all that were now *left*, and in the last stage of illness, were brought off with us. In this fresh ship, and with this fresh crew we left the coast, and entered on what is called the *Middle Passage*.

This horrid portion of the voyage was but one continued scene of barbarity, unremitting labour, mortality, and disease. Flogging, as in the outward passage, was a principal amusement in this.

The captain was so feeble that he could not move, but was obliged to be carried up and down: yet his illness, so far from abating his tyranny, seemed rather to increase it. When in this situation, he has often asked the persons who carried him whether they could judge of the torment he was in? and being answered, No—he has laid hold of their faces, and darting his nails into their cheeks with all his strength; on the person's crying out with the pain, he would then add, with the malignity of a demon, “There,—that is to give you a taste of what I feel.” He had always a parcel of trade knives within his reach, which he would also dart at them with ferocity on the most trifling

occasions.

The bed of this wretch, which he kept for weeks together, was in one corner of the cabin, and raised to a good height from the deck. To the posts of this bed he would order those to be tied that were to be flogged, so that their faces almost met his, and there he lay, enjoying their agonizing screams, while their flesh was lacerated without mercy: this was a frequent and a favourite mode of punishment.

The chief mate, whom we brought off the coast, died soon; the second mate soon after: their united duties devolved upon me. While the latter was in his illness, he got up one night, made a noise, tumbled some things about the half-deck, untied a hammock, and played some other delirious but innocent tricks. The captain, being a little recovered at that time, came out, and knocked him down. I do not at this time remember the weapon, but I know his head was sadly cut, and bleeding—in short, he was beat in a most dreadful manner; and, before the morning, he *was dead*. This man had not been many weeks on the coast, and left it in remarkable good health.

The cook, one day, burned some meat in the roasting: he was called to the cabin on that account, and beaten most violently with the spit. He begged and cried for mercy, but without effect, until the strength of his persecutor was exhausted. He crawled some where—*but never did duty afterwards*. He died in a day or two!

The poor creatures, as our numbers were thinned, were obliged to work when on the very verge of death. The *certainty*, that they could not live a day longer, did not procure them a grain of mercy. The boatswain, who had left the coast a healthy, hearty man, had been seized with the flux: he was in the last stage of it, but no remission from work was allowed him. He

grew at last so bad, that the mucus, blood, and whole strings of his intestines came from him without intermission. Yet, even in this situation—when he could not stand—he was forced to the wheel, to steer a large vessel; an arduous duty, that in all likelihood would have required two men, had we had people enough for the purpose. He was placed upon one of the mess-tubs, as not being able to stand, and that he might not dirty the deck. He remained at this painful duty as long as he could move his hands—he died on the same night! The body was, as usual, thrown overboard, without any covering but the shirt. It grew calm in the night, and continued to be so for a good part of the next day—in the morning his corpse was discovered floating along side, and kept close to us for some hours—it was a horrid spectacle, and seemed to give us an idea of the body of a victim, calling out to heaven for vengeance on our barbarity!

As the crew fell off, an accumulated weight of labour pressed upon the few survivors—and, towards the end of the middle passage, all idea of keeping the slaves in chains was given up; for there was not strength enough left among all the white men, to pull a single rope with effect. The slaves (at least a great number of them) were therefore freed from their irons, and *they* pulled and hawled as they were directed by the inefficient sailors. We were fortunate in having favourable weather: a smart gale of wind, such as with an able crew would not have created us more trouble than reefing our sails a little, must have inevitably sent us to destruction, and added us to a numerous list of people, that have perished in the same circumstances; but which list has been kept from the public eye by the most studied circumspection.

In this state of weakness, it may be readily supposed, that but little attention can be paid to those whose approach to the last

stage of their misery renders them helpless, and in want of aid: I remember that a man, who was ill, had one night crawled out of his hammock; he was so weak that he could not get back, but laid himself down on the gratings. There was no person to assist him.—In the morning, when I came upon the main deck—(I shudder at the bare recollection) he was still alive, but covered with blood—the hogs had picked his toes to the bone, and his body was otherwise mangled by them in a manner too shocking to relate.

## LETTER VI.

THOUGH the unabating cruelty, exercised upon *seamen* in the Slave Trade, first prompted me to give in my mite of information to the cause, yet it may not be thought foreign to the subject to make a few remarks on the treatment of the *slaves*. Mr. *Falconbridge's* account, which carries truth and conviction on the face of it, gives a most just description of their package, diet, and treatment. But no pen, no abilities, can give more than a very faint resemblance of the horrid situation. One *real* view—one MINUTE, absolutely spent in the slave rooms on the middle passage, would do more for the cause of humanity, than the pen of a *Robertson*, or the whole collective eloquence of the British senate.

That interest must operate on the captain to treat the slaves with kindness, has been advanced by those who have cogent reasons for wishing the continuance of this trade: but, like most of the arguments they advance, it has more of speciousness than of truth. The infernal passions, that seem to be nourished in the very vitals of this employ, bid defiance to every power of

controul. Humanity, justice, religion, have long lost their influence there. But even AVARICE, the author of the destructive business, when struggling with CRUELTY, loses its force, and finds its powers of dominion foiled by the very monster it self produced.

The slaves, with regard to attention to their health and diet, claim, from the purpose of the voyage, a consideration superior to the seamen: but when the capricious and irascible passions of their general tyrant were once set afloat, I never could see any difference in the cruelty of their treatment.

Flogging, that favourite exercise, was in continual use with the poor Negroes as well as the seamen. So incessant was the practice, that it is impossible to discriminate the particular occasions or circumstances. One or two, however, I may mention.

Just before we left the coast, and when the rooms were so crowded, that the slaves were packed together to a degree of pain, there came a boat-load of slaves along-side in the night, after all those on board had been put below. The new comers were also put down, to shift for themselves, and of course much noise ensued. In the womens' room, this was sadly increased by one of the strangers being so unfortunate as to throw down a certain tub. In the morning she was tied up to the captain's bed, with her face close to his, and a person was ordered to flog her. The idea of the sex operating on the unwilling executioner, she did not receive her punishment with all the severity that was expected. The executioner was himself immediately tied up, and for the lenity he had shewn, received a violent lashing. The woman was then flogged till her back was full of holes. I remember, that in healing them, they were so thick, that I was forced to cut two or three of them into one, to apply the



dressings.

That the chief tortures are applied to the unhappy sufferers, on refusing the diet that is offered them, has been fully mentioned by others. We had our share of them; and the lash was often inflicted until the poor victims fainted away with pain. Two women, by many degrees the two finest slaves in the ship, felt a severity of this kind with such poignancy, that folding themselves in each others arms, they plunged over the poop of the vessel into the sea, and were drowned. We were obliged to put all the women immediately below, as they cried out in a most affecting manner, and many of them were preparing to follow their companions. These are the people whom the good trader's represent, as wanting every kind of sensibility!

Were I to transcribe a regular journal of the usage of the slaves on the middle passage, it would be but a repetition of acts similar to the above, and varied perhaps only by the circumstances that attended it. One instance more of brutality I would, however, willingly relate, as practiced by the captain on an unfortunate slave, of the age of eight or nine, but that I am *obliged* to withhold it; for though my heart bleeds at the recollection, though the act is too atrocious and bloody to be passed over in silence, yet as I cannot express it in any words that would not severely wound the feelings of the *delicate* reader, I must be content with suffering it to escape among those numerous hidden and unrevealed enormities, the offspring of barbarity and despotism, that are committed daily in the prosecution of this execrable trade.

Before I quit this subject of the Slaves, I must mention a circumstance that, I dare say very often occurs, though perhaps seldom with so advantageous a succedaneum. The doctor and his mate being both dead, the medicine chest was given into my

charge and disposal: a knowledge of Latin, and a little medical reading, were all my qualifications. What a situation would it have been for an ignorant, an unfeeling, or an indolent man! Medicines or poisons to be dealt out promiscuously to such a number of persons, all afflicted with disease, during a passage through the tedious latitudes across the Atlantic. The only directions I had to go by, were a few remarks on the last stage of the flux, written in a minute or two, by a surgeon at St. Thomas's, on a bit of cartridge paper.

## LETTER VII.

THE principles of the Slave Trade, and the conduct of the officers on the voyage, are *alike*, in all the cases I have met with, whether from actual knowledge, or well-attested information. Publications therefore of this kind must grow tiresome, and be necessarily marked with an unfavourable degree of sameness; unfavorable, I mean, with regard to the patience of cold, dispassionate readers: for, taken in another point of view, it seems to give additional strength to the cause. Is it not a strong presumptive proof of the veracity of the circumstances that have been offered, that a number of men, unknown to each other, from different parts of the kingdom, dating their facts so long asunder, bringing their scenes of destruction from different places and vessels, without an invitation, without interest to serve, without any other purpose than that of supporting the cause of humanity, should concur in such a wonderful degree, that a warm reader would be almost led to imagine, that the observations were all made on one voyage, and the misery and murder the produce of the same

vessel? And, yet, to a *multitude* of proofs is opposed the simple unsupported affirmation, that the practice is not general. I have again to declare, that though I made every possible inquiry, and had the very best opportunity for those inquiries, on the coast, in the West Indies, and in England, I never heard but of *one* Guinea vessel, in which the usage and conduct were in any degree of moderation. The lists were filled with famine, flogging, torture, and every horrid species of wanton barbarity and oppression.

I will not, Sir, press any farther upon your time. I hope you will excuse the inaccuracies to be found in these letters, and if I should have appeared either warm or earnest, let it be remembered how hard it is to be cold in such a cause; that these remarks have not been compiled from the patient and laborious stores of collected evidence; but come warm from a heart that has felt the miseries it describes, and from a recollection, that still smarts with the barbarities it has witnessed.

THE END.

## Transcriber's note

The original orthography of the book has been preserved, even though some variants or systematic misspellings may be accidental. Among them, *circumsance/circumstance*, *mein/mien* (both rhyming with *scene*), *bussines/business*, *the'*. Contemporary texts have been consulted for parallel occurrences of dubious spellings like *womens' room*, *anavoidable*, which have been retained.

Genitive 's affixed to italicized words have been left inconsistently italicized, as they were.

The following errors have been corrected:

- p. 30, l. 11: **nor selfih guile** → nor selfish guile
- p. 37, l. 10: **sits ghastly Death** → sits ghastly Death.
- p. 55, l. 24–25: **eat-ten up by Tuesday morning** → eaten up by Tuesday morning
- p. 61, l. 14: **that the method of,** → that the method of
- p. 62, l. -2: **the practice was, To** → the practice was, to
- p. 70, l. 8: **would have required too men** → would have required two men
- p. 70, l. 18: **his corps was discovered** → his corpse was discovered

- p. 71, l. 18: ~~no person to assist him—~~ → no person to assist him.—
- p. 72, l. -2: ~~capricious and irascible~~ → capricious and irascible
- p. 73, l. 18: ~~as throw down~~ → as to throw down

[The end of *The Guinea Voyage* by James Field Stanfield]