

The Answer.

Stepped from out the dark battalion
 One of modest mien and guise
 Who bore the Cross upon his shoulder
 And Heaven's lovelight in his eyes
 Ne with open hand extended
 Hand ungloved and yet ungrim
 Grasped that of his ebon neighbor
 And thus kindly answered him.

I "Thou hast come to us for Freedom
 "Thou hast asked the dearest boon
 "Which the human spirit seeketh
 "Or the human heart hath known
 Thy freedom brother,
 But that freedom meaneth more
 "Than a mere surcease from toil
 "More than just release from bondage
 More than shunning earth's turmoil
 "Which now makes thy dark blood boil.

II "Thou must learn of Manhood's duties
 "Ere tho canst be truly free
 "Thou must know thy Saviour's teachings
 "Ere thy soul hath liberty.

"True thy mind is not enshrouded

"In Moslemah's sable pall

"But I fear thy sight is clouded

"Thou art Superstition's thrall.

III "Science too must shine upon thee

"For the world is full of lore

"Lest by Knowledge's crafty legion

"Thou be made a slave once more

"Therefore yield thee to my guidance

"Thou and thy dark fellows all

"And we'll trace ^{the} paths of Wisdom

"Which must lead to Freedom's hall

IV "We will let the tide of battle

"Sweep on by us if it will.

"If ye may not fight for Freedom

"Ye may labor for it still

"And we'll pray the God of battles

"In the daytime and the night

"Once again to bare His right arm

"Once again to show His Might

V And roll on the tide of conquest
 O'er the cursed Sodom-land
 To bring low the proud oppressor
 And to smite the smit hand
 And incline the hearts of freemen
 Unto Justice and the Truth
 That they slay the Gorgon Slavery
 And its children Lust and Ruth."

~~VI~~ And I saw the ebon children
 Sitting round him on the sod
 While he showed the way of Wisdom
 And revealed the plan of God.
 And they gazed with mute attention
 While the teacher-youth displayed
 All those strange and mystic symbols
 Which at first old Cadmus made
 And "beneath the dark Magnolia"
 Amid the down-filled Cotton-bolls
 Self forgetting there he taught them
 To peruse our mystic scrolls.

And I saw them lowly bending
 And I heard upon the air
 Woman's voice and man's ascending
 Unto God in humble prayer.

(And the rough blaspheming soldiers
 Stood rebuked before the slave
 As they listened to their worship
 And the deepest reverence gave
 And they felt how great the shame is
 That these men of Christian mind
 Tyrant masters but for profit
 Others for unholy profit
 In vile servitude should bind.)

Then there came the kindly feeling
 Swelling every patriot-breast
 That to lift these trodden children
 From the dust was God's behest.