

THE  
**AFRICAN WIDOW ;**

BEING THE  
**HISTORY**  
OF A

**POOR BLACK WOMAN ;**

Showing how she grieved for the Death of her  
Child, and the consequences of her doing so.



**LONDON :**

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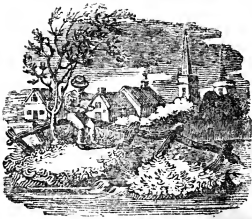
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THE  
AFRICAN WIDOW.

ON lately reading the Report of a Society instituted for the relief of the wants of the poor African and Asiatic strangers, whom various circumstances in Providence have brought to England, was much struck with the very affecting Narrative of a Black woman, which is added to the Report.—It occurred to me, that it might be well to state the circumstances of her life, in a few plain and simple rhymes. The attempt is here made, preserving the particulars of the history as they are recorded in the account above mentioned.

L. R.



CHRISTIANS, attend while I relate  
 A new and simple story ;  
 'Twill teach your heart with thankful-  
 ness  
 To praise the Lord of Glory.

In London city once there dwelt  
 A poor, but honest pair,  
 God bless'd them with an infant child,  
 And she was all their care.

From Africa's far distant shores,  
 To this good land they came,  
 Friendless and poor alike unknown  
 To fortune and to fame.

The times grew hard, and keen dis-  
tress

Forc'd him from her to flee ;  
Mutual support in hopes to gain,  
The husband went to sea.

Oft would the tender wife with tears  
Her absent husband mourn :  
Oft, as she view'd their darling child,  
She sigh'd for his return.

But, oh ! my heart it bleeds to think  
What sorrows did betide,  
The parents' hope, this much-lov'd  
child,  
It sicken'd, droop'd, and died.

And while she mourn'd her infant's  
loss,  
Sad tidings came from sea ;  
The ship was wreck'd, her husband  
drown'd,  
A helpless widow she.



What tongue can tell, what heart  
 conceive,  
 The horrors of her mind ?  
 Her husband lost, her infant dead,  
 And she was left behind !

Loudly she wept, and sigh'd, and  
 groan'd,  
 With anguish almost wild ;  
 And still she cried, " My husband's  
 dead,  
 And I have lost my child !"

Was there no holy hope divine,  
 To calm her anxious care ?  
 No consolation from above ?  
 No remedy in prayer ?

Ah no ! her dark untutor'd mind  
 A stranger was to truth :  
 No God, no Christ, no hope she knew ;  
 A heathen from her youth.

Deepest despair possess'd her soul,  
 She spake in accents wild,  
 And still she cried, " My husband's  
 dead,  
 And I have lost my child !"



Oft to the infant's grave she went,  
 Full many a tear to shed;  
 And as she wept, still ever cried,  
 " Ah me! my child is dead!"



Each following week, when Sabbath-  
 bells

Proclaim'd the hour of pray'r,  
 The open'd church-yard gate soon  
 brought

The weeping mother there.

Full three long years in hopeless woe;  
 She mourn'd her wretched lot;  
 Comfort, like Rachel, she refus'd,  
 Because her child was not.\*

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\* Jer. xxxi. 15:

How dark the sorrows of a mind  
 With grief like this perplex;  
 In this world she no comfort knew,  
 She sought none in the next.

A moment pause, while thus I end  
 The first part of my story;  
 And when you hear what's yet to  
 come,  
 Oh, give to God the glory!

Christians, 'I'll tell you how the Lord  
 Pity'd this widow's sorrow;  
 For oft the tear that's shed to-night,  
 Ends in a smile to-morrow.\*



From week to week, for three long  
years,

With solemn pace and slow ;  
The widow trod the church-yard path  
In unavailing woe.

Once as she went her custom'd way,  
Clos'd was the church-yard gate ;  
Far from the grave was she compell'd  
In pensive grief to wait.

With streaming eyes she view'd the  
spot

Where her dear babe was laid ;  
Deny'd access, she sat and cried,  
“ Ah me ! my child is dead ! ”

Within th' adjoining house of God  
Was heard the voice of pray'r,  
But all was vain to her, who knew  
No voice to soothe her care.

Once more she came, the gate was  
clos'd,

And she stood weeping there ;  
The only path-way which remained,  
Lay through the house of pray'r.

She saw th' attendant at the door,  
And ask'd her leave to pass ;  
“ Pray, let me go to yonder grave,  
My child's beneath the grass.”

Thankful to gain her kind consent;  
 Swift through the church she fled,  
 And reach'd the grave, where still she  
 cried,  
 " Ah me ! my child is dead ! "

While in the church rejoicing saints  
 Songs of thanksgiving shout,  
 Low on the ground, in sad despair,  
 The widow sat without.

The hour of mercy then approach'd,  
 And God beheld her case,  
 The preacher now began t' unfold  
 The mysteries of grace.

She linger'd long, but ere he clos'd,  
 She rose to journey home :  
 Re-passing through the church she  
 heard,  
 " Flee from the wrath to come." \*

Struck with the alarming sound she  
 stopp'd,  
 Astonish'd and distress'd !  
 The preacher cried, " Arise, depart,  
 For this is not your rest." †

\* Matt. iii. 7.

† Micah ii. 10.



Deep in her heart conviction sunk,  
 Each word, each thought seem'd  
 new ;  
 She long'd to ask, " Can I be sav'd ?  
 What must a sinner do ? "

O'erwhelm'd with many a rising fear,  
 She felt the weight of sin,  
 She wish'd to seek salvation's path,  
 But where must she begin ?

Convinc'd how far from God she liv'd,  
 Homeward she bent her way ;  
 With thoughts confus'd and fault'ring  
 tongue,  
 Trembling she tried to pray

For mercy now she hourly sued,  
 Dropping repentant tears ;  
 The thoughts of judgment, death, and  
 sin,  
 Appall'd her soul with fears.

Earnest she read the word of God,  
 But could not find relief,  
 As yet a vail was o'er her eyes,  
 And she a prey to grief.

A neighbour told her, whom she ask'd  
 What course she must pursue,  
 " A worthy lady lives hard by,  
 Who'll kindly speak to you.

" She is a lady rich and great,  
 But she's a Christian true ;  
 She lives a life of doing good,  
 And she'll be good to you."

Gladly she hasten'd to the house  
 Where this kind lady dwelt,  
 To her she open'd all her heart,  
 And all she fear'd and felt.

With sweet affection and regard,  
 The lady heard her woes,  
 Then kindly pointed out the way  
 For souls to seek repose.

She spoke of sin, and spoke of Christ,  
 His righteousness and blood ;  
 Show'd how the sinner's only hope  
 In Jesu's sufferings stood.

‘ Fear not,’ said she, ‘ but humbly  
 come,

With this thy only plea,  
 A helpless sinner sure am I,  
 But Jesus died for me.

“ Be every trial sent of God,  
 A med'cine to thy mind ;  
 Thy husband and thy infant's loss  
 Were both in love design'd.

“ These were thy idols, these en-  
 gross'd  
 Thy soul's entirest care ;  
 He took them both, that thou might'st  
 learn  
 To seek thy God by pray'r.

“ That grave, where thou so oft has  
 heav'd  
 The sigh of sad despair,  
 A place of mercy prov'd to thee,  
 A Saviour found thee there.

“ Freely resign thine all to him,  
 Whose truth shall make thee free :  
 Believe it, and be comforted,  
 He gave himself for thee.”

Thus holy counsel from her lips  
 In tender accents fell ;  
 Parting she took her hand and said,  
 “ Sister in Christ, farewell.”



“ Sister !”—she scarce believ'd the  
 sound,  
 “ Sister !”—can this be true ?  
 Can such a lady own a wretch,  
 And call her “ sister ” too ?

The word it pierc'd her inmost soul,  
 The tear responsive fell ;  
 What were the feelings of her heart,  
 No mortal tongue can tell.

She thought how lovely grace appears  
 In those whom God makes his ;  
 What must then be the love of Christ,  
 Which brings forth fruit like this ?



Home she return'd, and prostrate fell  
 At a Redeemer's feet,  
 Pleaded his blood, his life, his death,  
 Before the mercy-seat.

Light, like a flood, burst o'er her soul,  
 As Jesus seem'd to say,  
 " I've blotted thy transgressions out,\*  
 I've wash'd thy sins away."

Thus did the Holy Comforter  
 His peaceful joys impart,  
 And pour'd the oil of gladness out,  
 To heal her wounded heart.

" Blest be my Saviour God," she  
 cried,  
 " All glory be to Thee ;  
 I know that 'tis in faithfulness,  
 Thou hast afflicted me. †

" Dark was my day of ignorance,  
 And dark of sin my night,  
 But now the shade of death is turn'd  
 To morning's welcome light. ‡

" Incline my soul to serve thee, Lord,  
 My every power employ,  
 For thou hast heal'd the widow's heart,  
 And made it sing for joy. §

\* Isa. xliv. 22  
 † Amos v. 8.

‡ Ps. cxxix. 75  
 § Job. xxix 17

“ Farewell, my babe; no more I’ll  
 weep,  
 Nor at thy grave despair,  
 But trust that God hath made my child  
 His own eternal care.

“ That house of God, where oft I’ll go,  
 Shall still this thought afford,  
 I went to mourn an infant dead,  
 But found a living Lord.”

Christians, adieu! I now have told  
 My new and simple story,  
 Ascribe the honour all to God,  
 And praise the Lord of Glory.





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