

**AFRICA, A
MISSIONARY POEM**

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Africa, a missionary poem by Joseph Ridgeway

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JOSEPH RIDGEWAY

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MISSIONARY POEM**

AFRICA

A MISSIONARY POEM.

BY

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RECTOR OF HIGH BODING, ESSEX.



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1842.

156.

THE following short poem is one of a series, in which the effects of sin, as depicted in the sad condition of the unevangelized portions of the human race, and the triumphs of the Gospel, as illustrated in different scenes of missionary labour at the present day, are placed in contrast with each other.

The suppression or publication of the remaining parts depends on whether the present brief attempt is deemed worthy of perusal or otherwise.

April 26, 1842.

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AFRICA.

LAND of the sable African ! his home
If unmolested, eminent in woe,
From whose wide circling shores the bitter cries
Of suff'ring man, for centuries prolong'd,
Compassion vainly supplicate, thy name*
Descriptive of thy state, is well bestow'd ;
A sever'd land, mysteriously disjoined
From all the wonted sympathies of life,
And doom'd to be oppress'd, a vast extent
Of pathless regions, though intrepid men,

* Among the other roots from which the word "Africa" may have been derived, is the Hebrew term "phreka," broken off or separated, which strongly expresses the relation of this continent in reference to Asia, (from which it is nearly detached,) the original country of mankind. Thus Aphreka, slightly modified, is Africa, the detached or separated country." Meyer's Mod. Geog., vol. ii. 392

Martyrs to science, resolute to die,
Have oft essay'd to penetrate these depths,
And solve the myst'ry—plain and mountain range,
And sandy desert, where the scorching sun,
By the refreshing breeze of milder climes
Untemper'd, fiercely glares—when shall the light
Of welcome morn, aggressive on the gloom
Of ages, glorious rise ; the mists that long
Have veiled this mighty continent disperse
Before advancing day, and grace and truth
Like copious dews, drop fatness on the waste ?
When shall the welcome messengers of heaven,
With mercy charged, on deeds of love intent,
Visit each scatter'd tribe, each clime explore—
Kashna and Bornou, where the lake of Tchad
Glow's 'neath the solar ray, where Houssa lies
Or Timbuctoo, or where the long-sought tide
Of the majestic Niger winds its course—
As with unwear'd eye the negro seeks,
Midst sand and clay, grains of the virgin gold,
From some rich crevice in the mountain's brow,
Wash'd by descending streams, thus searching out
Fragments of erring man more precious far.
O'er boundless tracts the sable nations spread,
Unnumber'd as the leaves that densely clothe
Their native forests, or the waves that beat
On Afric's shore.