

“Bound for the Promised Land”*

by Mr. Ward

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*From Florida’s stormy banks I go;
I’ve bid the South “Good by”;
No longer shall they treat me so,
And knock me in the eye.
The northern states is where I’m bound.
My cross is more than double –
If the chief executive can be found.
I’ll tell him all my trouble.*

*Thousands have gone on there before,
And enjoyed their northern live;
Nothing there they can deplore,
So they wrote back for their wives.
Thousands more now wait to go
To join the glorious sop.
The recruiters failed to take one more
Because the “Crackers” made ‘em stop.*

*Arise! ye Darkies now a-slave
Your chance at last has come;
Hold up your head with courage brave,
‘Cause times are changing some,
God is punctual to his word,
Faithful to his dating;
Humble prayers is what he heard,
After years of faithful waiting.
All before this change was made
They took me for a fool.
No respect to me was paid –
They classed me for a fool.
For centuries I was knocked and cuffed,
And imposed upon by southern “whites”;
For fifty years they had me bluffed
And robbed me of my “right.” . . .*

*Hasten on, my dark brother,
Duck the “Jim Crow” laws.
No “Crackers” north to slap your mother
Or knock you in the jaw.
No “Crackers” there to seduce your sister,
Nor hang you to a limb,
And you’re not obliged to call them mister,
Nor show your teeth at them.*

*Now, why should I remain longer south,
To be kicked and dogged around?
“Crackers” to knock me in the mouth
And shoot my brother down.
No, I won’t. I’m leaving today,
No longer can I wait.
If the recruiters fail to take me ‘way,
I’m bound to catch a freight.*

* Source: Steven A. Reich, ed., “Primary Documents,” *Encyclopedia of the Great Black Migration*. Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood Press, 2006