
T H E

M A I D O F A R R A G O N .

O H, ye! whose sympathetic hearts are form'd
To woe responsive, and whose trem'ulous nerves
Vibrate to Sorrow's mournful airs—attend!
Not you, ye gay! not you, ye vacant crouds!
Who labour through the pleasures of the world,
Nor feel existence when they cease t' impel;
I call not you!—for, oh, your callous bosoms
Fell Diffipation steels, and robs your minds
Of the sweet energies bestow'd by Heaven:
But, come, ye few! who love the lonely hour;
Who know the sense refin'd, the charming agony,
Which Pity gives the hallow'd hearts she fills;
To you I call! oh, come, and trace with me
(Whilst glittering Hesperus holds high his torch)
The mazy windings of yon solemn wood.
Behold the lawn, which opens on the left,
With crocus border'd, aromatic thyme,

And

B

2 THE MAID OF ARRAGON.

And ev'ry fragrant shrub that tempts the bee
Down from the liquid air, to bathe in sweets.

The op'ning wicket of that humble cot,
By slow degrees, moves gently on its hinge:
And now, with cautious tread, the soft OSMIDA,
Looking a blessing on her slumb'ring Sire,
The threshold quits; when, from his short repose,
Aged ALMANZOR starts:—Where art thou, Child?
Where is my darling? Oh! return, OSMIDA!
Why wilt thou wander in-Night's chilly air,
And trust thy bosom to its piercing dews?
Return, my Child! th' unpitied winds will shake
Thy tender frame.—

The night is calm, my Father!
Scarcely a zephyr moves the restless aspin;
And the clear moon, with soft inviting beam,
Looks through the foliage of the lofty pines.
A moment let me breathe the balmy air!
Confin'd beneath the cottage roof by fear,
And more confin'd by duteous cares for thee,
All day I live immur'd. Then let me now
Taste Nature's blessings—exercise and air.

Heaven guard my Child! But soon return, OSMIDA;
And downy sleep shake slumbers on thy pillow!

OSMIDA quits the cot, and bends her steps
Towards the margin of a neighb'ring lake:
But not its lucid bosom tempts her steps,
Nor moon inviting through the lofty pines,
Nor balmy air, nor healthful exercise;
Ah, no!—it is to breathe her bosom'd anguish,
Where Grief, though audible, wastes her sad voice
In ambient air—not torturing the ear

Of the rever'd ALMANZOR, Sire belov'd!

Bending

Bending to earth, with eyes that penetrate
 The glowing canopy of heaven; in sounds
 More mournful than the widow'd stock-dove's plaints
 —Tender as youthful mother's lulling song,
 She thus address'd Omnipotence divine:

Oh, Thou! in whose eternal, boundless sight,
 The woes, or happiness, that overpower
 The mind of finite man, seem but as drops,
 That in the vast abyfs unite their littleness,
 To form one mighty whole—to Thee I pray!
 Not for myself I pray, but for my Father;
 For him whose care-worn heart, drooping, opprefs'd,
 And torn with barbed griefs, seems torn from thee.
 His soul her wonted confidence forsakes;
 He falls from thee; he leans not on the rock,
 The sacred rock, by which alone he stands
 —And quitting, sinks to measureless despair.
 Oh, Thou, accept my humble heart for his!
 Hear, hear ALMANZOR, in QSMIDA'S voice!
 'Tis he implores. Bless, comfort, heal his griefs;
 And to thyself attach his sorrow-tempted heart!
 Next for my *Country*, Heav'n, oh, hear my pray'r!
 Behold her struggles with a pitying eye!
 Drive from thy temple-gates the mocking infidel!
 Restore thy altars! Send——

The pious Virgin's voice, with terror choak'd,
 Unfinish'd left her pray'r. Forth, from the shade
 Of the surrounding thicket, rush'd a Knight,
 In shining armour clad, borne on a steed
 Who seem'd to scorn the earth, his light heel pass'd,
 As though *his* element had been the air:
 Swift, as the breath of fierce Euroclydon
 He bore his master to the spangled lake,

Whose

4 THE MAID OF ARRAGON,

Whose borders, by OSMIDA's knee still press'd,
In thousand glowing colours bloom'd around her,
In thousand scents perfum'd the tranquil air.

Light vaulting on the ground, the Knight approach'd,
And in such courteous phrase address'd the Maid,
That half her terrors ended with his words.

Leave me, Sir Knight! with firmness she reply'd;
And as she spoke, her voice, though sweet, express'd
A custom to command. Leave me, Sir Knight!

This solitude is to Misfortune sacred;
None ever tread these unfrequented wilds,
But those to whom the door of sweet Society,
And Friendship's holy gate, are shut forever.

And can the social door, and Friendship's gate,
To thee oppose their brazen locks? O Heaven!

The *peopled* world thy angels have forsook,
And here in deserts dwell—in human form,
But in celestial beauty! Tell me, Virgin!

—For sure the awe, with which thy eye inspires,
Bespeaks thy vestal state—tell me, fair Maid!
What ills, what fore affliction, *thee* have driven
To seek, in these sequester'd shades, felicity
By man refus'd?

My sorrows, gentle Knight!

I dare not whisper to the speechless air

—Still less intrust them to a stranger's ear:

Yet, from your courtesy, I must demand

My *solitude* again; and, as you hope

For blessing from the Pow'r who hears my voice,

Swear never to divulge, that in these glades

A Maid you found—by outward beauty grac'd,

But whose sad heart, Sorrow hath call'd her own,

And stern Affliction long enroll'd a sister!

But

The Stranger paus'd: and then, as if to win
 Her confidence, and woo her from reserve
 By frank example, thus the Nymph address'd:
 To *whom* should I reveal this blest'd abode?
Whose feet conduct to violate your haunts?
 I, who, like you, by keen misfortunes press'd,
 Seek shelter from the world; and even now
 Forsake my native skies; quit *Gallia's* shores,
 Her purple vineyards leave, her fertile meads,
 Her ever blooming fields—all these I quit—
 For these, to wretched hearts, bloom, swell, and fertile, in vain,

Unhappy Youth! breath'd forth the sad OSMIDA;
 And is Affliction's appetite so vast,

That daily victims can't allay her rage?
 But, gentle Knight! where will your journey end?
 What Porter waits to hear your bugle sound,
 And ope the gates, with welcome in his face
 To greet his honour'd Lord's expected guest?

Alas! sweet Maid! no hospitable gate

DE COURCI seeks; *no* welcome waits his steps:

To Eastern climes I bend my weary course;

—*Jerusalem* the home which ends my progress.

There let me bear *your* woes. Instruct me, Lady!

That at the Holy Sepulchre your name

May animate my pray'rs; that there your griefs

May, sanctify'd, ascend the porch of heav'n,

And, in their stead, soft peace, and blooming joy,

Return into your breast. That duty pass'd,

My sword shall lend its vigour to the cause

—The sacred cause, which arms our Christian legions;

And drains our cities of their val'rous Knights.

OSMIDA's eye, beaming with new-born hope,

And gratitude awak'd, shot forth her thoughts,

C

Erg

6 THE MAID OF ARRAGON.

Ere from her vermeil lips these accents stole
—In breath more fragrant than an Eastern morn;
Wilt thou remember me at *Zion's* gate?
And shall *my* sorrows from the holy cave,
In which the Saviour drew his *second* breath,
Ascend to the Almighty's throne?—Again
She stopp'd, and check'd her growing frankness.
The Stranger saw instinctive prudence rise,
And fear'd to give the virtue time to act.
Yes, he rejoin'd, with zeal more pure and ardent
Than converts feel, who, at the holy altar,
Bewail a life of curst idolatry,
Will I your sorrows pour, in that blest spot
Where Sorrow surely cannot plead in vain.
Struck with the piety which deck'd his words,
Yet doubting still, the timid, trusting Virgin,
In silence, with herself thus cogitates:
A *Christian* Knight he is, and with his life
Now hast'ning to support the Christian cause.
Oceans and continents will soon divide us:
Why then the knowledge of my woes with-hold,
When blest Benevolence demands the tale?
Then, turning to the Stranger, meekly said
—Such kind persuasion confidence demands;
Yet patience will you need, whilst I relate
Events so *strong*, they fitter would become
A manly tongue. Of battles I must speak,
Of falling kingdoms, and victorious arms.
These strains accord not with a female voice;
Yet will I strive to nerve my thoughts and language,
And raise my fancy to the lofty theme.
But not alone of war shall I discourse,
Of meeting armies, or contending states.

Here

—Here on this sloping bank, Sir Knight, repose;
And I a tale—for Pity—will unfold,

Were Pity's tears innum'rous as the sands.

The Knight, with token of respect, obey'd.

OSMIDA, with the grace of sweet reserve,

At gentle distance, near the moss-grown roots

Of an expanding beech, a Wood-nymph seem'd

—A woodland goddess! and her grassy seat

Chaste *Dian's* rural throne. Grave Recollection

On her sweet features spread an air compos'd;

Whilst in Night's zenith—'midst her radiant court,

The crystal Moon seem'd fix'd in still attention:

The silent waters of the lake more silent flow'd:

The Zephyrs, drawing close their silken wings,

In soft subjection held the rustling branches:

The wheeling bat far off her circles draws;

Whilst the Night's sweet musician still'd her song,

To learn a sadder note—from fair OSMIDA.

All thus in silence wrapt, the thoughtful Maid,

With tone sedate, begins the promis'd tale.

This happy clime—this *Aragonian* realm,

Had late a Monarch, whom her Sons rever'd;

—As *King* rever'd him, as a *Father* lov'd:

He lov'd his People, knew no care but theirs;

And the fond blessings, which they gave his name,

Blunted the thorns a diadem conceals.

Peace, in this happy reign, her throne establish'd,

And brought her proper blessings in her train;

Fair Commerce wav'd her pennons in our ports;

The fertile plough subdu'd our sterile fields;

Our granaries, like those of *Egypt*, drew

From neighb'ring countries, riches and renown.

The

§ THE MAID OF ARRAGON.

The cottage Peasant, round his well-fill'd board,
Saw thankful faces and contented hearts :
No iron taxes grip'd his pallid frame,
Nor tore the morsel from his children's mouths :
Blithe as the morn he rose to healthful labour,
And hail'd, with joy, th'approach of festive eve.

Such once the favour'd lot of envied *Arragon*.
Her fame, her riches, spreading to the East,
Entic'd the Moors from their polluted home :
Sudden their prowess invade our peaceful seas ;
—Sudden the bold Barbarians croud our shores ;
Defenceless hamlets turn unnatural beacons,
And blaze the woe-fraught tidings through the land.
Like a night-torrent, fierce, unchecked, they come
With devastation at their courfers heels ;
Death, rapine, ruin, mark their dreadful progress,
And reach the bulwarks of the royal city.

Deep consternation spreads through ev'ry street ;
Th'affrighted virgins to the temples run ;
The mother grasps her child, and shrieking flies ;
Whilst husbands, fathers, brothers, all in arms,
Chide the dear mourners who retard their speed,
Snatch last adieus, and rush upon the walls.

But from the walls, what image strikes the view !
A turban'd phalanx on the hill appear'd,
Rapid descending to the plain below.
Upon the right advanc'd a mighty column,
Of armed chariots form'd—so thickly set
With scythes, and swords, and barbed spears, each seem'd
A steely porcupine ; whose burnish'd quills,
Catching the rays of the meridian sun,
Gleam'd back upon the town refulgent horror.

Upon

THE MAID OF ARRAGON.

Upon the left hand mov'd the tawny marksmen,
Whose ebon bows, and quivers richly stor'd,

They fung, were given by Death—unerring archer!

The dreadful pomp descended to the plain,
Fix'd their bold standards, and entrenchments form'd,

—Whilst our scar'd citizens observ'd their works,
Like trembling birds, who, looking from their nests

Upon the charming cockatrice, behold

Inevitable fate. But black despair,

That first enerv'd, next lent their courage fury:

Lead us! they cry'd—lead to the *Moorish* camp!

What are their numbers, *single* as they come?

With us, our parents, children, lovers, laws,

Religion, liberty—all join the battle,

—Brace our firm arms, and give ten thousand points,

Ten thousand deaths, to ev'ry Christian sword.

This holy rage, like sparks electric, flew

From man to man. Each urg'd his valiant friend,

To save their city, matrons, daughters, wives,

—As if on *each* their preservation hung.

Scarce could the pious King restrain their ardor,

So sure they seem'd of conquest and revenge.

But he, who knew that from th'almighty arm

Their foes' destruction only could proceed,

The gates of every temple open threw,

And, with humiliation deep, repair'd

Before the sacred altar of our God.

The soldiers, citizens, the nobles croud,

And ev'ry holy roof grew instant vocal.

Prostrate and weeping, they implor'd the High

For *Gideon's* sword, and mighty *Joshua's* arm.

“Shield us!” they cry'd—“Oh, save thy faithful people!

Nor give us to the mockers, for a scorn!

D

Omnipotence!

Omnipotence! preserve us from the yoke
 The foe prepares for our devoted necks!
 Humble the *boasters*, who repose their strength,
 Not on *thy* arm, but in their own frail numbers!
 To Thee! O God of Battles! we appeal.
 Hear, hear our voice!" — When lo! from Heaven's bright concave,
 In gracious intimation, that their prayers,
 Wafted by guardian spirits, reach'd the throne,
 A mighty peal of thunder rapt their ears,
 And purple lightnings quiver in the sky.
 The *Arragons*, with hopes thus sanctified,
 Rush'd from the temples, like impetuous flames;
 —Or like fierce tigers, who their destin'd prey
 At distance see; and pant, and foam, and rage,
 With pride of certain conquest. But their prince
 Strove this ineautious ardor to restrain.
 —All-bounteous Heav'n, he cry'd, by *means*, not *miracles*,
 Decides the fate of armies, and of kings.
 Let prudent foresight, then, direct your aims,
 Lest rashness blights the harvest of your courage!
 The haughty *Moors*, contemptuous of our strength,
 Doubtless expect to see our opening gates.
 Receive them, masters, at the trumpet's signal;
 To aid their blindness, we will offers make,
 Of terms too humble for a state in freedom,
 And yet too high for Conquerors to accept.
 Then, in the night's meridian, when no star,
 With tell-tale beams upon our polish'd mail,
 Shall shew us to the watchful centinel,
 —Then will we rouse the lion from his den,
 And prove our courage worthy of our cause.
 The humming notes of growing approbation,
 Like distant thunder, gaining on the ear,

Broke.

Broke forth at once into applause shouts.
 Live! live the King! re-echoed ev'ry mouth;

O guard my People! said the heart-touch'd King.

The heralds sent, and their misleading terms,
 To blind, with fears unfelt, the *Moorish* camp,
 All now prepare, for the wish'd hour of onset.

The sounding anvils beat their clanging music;
 Peace-rusted swords regain their edge and polish;
 The nervous archer tries his idle bow,

And gives new plumage to his missile darts.

The matrons, virgins, catch the martial fire:

These songs prepare, *these* rosy garlands twine,

To greet, on their return, the conqu'ring heroes.

Yet, 'mongst the virgins, *one* sad heart was found;

'Twas in the bosom of the royal Princess.

Her vows, her plighted troth, had long been given

To young MONTENOS, Duke *Medina's* Heir.

He, only he, could melt her icy breast;

—None could so well deserve an untouch'd heart.

His mind, more noble than his princely birth,

Lent glory to his name: matchless his form!

As poets feign celestial Virtue wears,

When visible to man. Oh! wonder not,

The Princess lov'd with strength no common flame

Could have inspir'd! Her soul was full of love:

She liv'd, she breath'd, she thought, but for MONTENOS.

Ten thousand terrors now besieg'd her soul;

Ten thousand *nothings*, which her fancy drest

In colour, substance, circumstance, and form.

Yet, from her lover, 'twas her care to hide

The tender weakness which her heart confest.

Shall I, she cry'd, a mighty kingdom's heir,

Shew terrors that the humbler maids despise?

My

My Country rocks upon a precipice.

—Go then, MONTENOS! prop her falling state!
Repel th'invader! tread on Slav'ry's neck!

And 'mongst her dear preservers be thou *Chief!*

The shades of eve advance, and from the camp
The subtle messengers return—return

With insult loaded, and contemptuous threats.

No less the *Moors* demand than general vassalage;

That *conquer'd* Arragon—so proud their style!

Should yield them homage, and perpetual tribute.

A *day* they grant us to resolve on slavery,

—To turn apostates, and revolt from Heaven,

Or see our towers extended in the dust.

No terms or messengers they will receive;

But open'd gates, and crescents on our spires,

The *answer* they expect. This lofty menace

Lets with surprize than anger was receiv'd;

—It spoke the spirit of the fierce invaders.

Some hours—tremendous pause! were yet to pass
Between this period, and that meant for action:

Gloomy suspense sat brooding o'er the army,

And *bid*, not *damp'd*, the ardor of their courage.

All, self-collected, seem'd retir'd within,

And the full mind had render'd language mute.

At this grand moment, when no thought of aid,

—Of human aid, had glanc'd across the soul,

In from the Western gate—like bees returning

From their diurnal circuit—rush'd amain

Ten thousand sons of war. At this blest'd fight,

Such transport seiz'd the citizens, and troops,

It seem'd triumphant holiday, and joy

Would even in frolic sport—so sudden the effect.

To *Leon's* King we ow'd this grateful succour:

He

He heard the *Moors* were hov'ring on our coasts,
And, as a *Christian* king, the cause adopted.

But now the streets, choak'd up with armed men,
Pour back their warriors through the Western portal:
There, in the marshy vale, that to the North
Extends its rich campaign, the army grew
In form. Pardon if I, a simple Maid,
Cannot relate, Sir Knight! in artful terms,
How, in *what order* grew. I have not skill
To use the phrases chance hath giv'n mine ear:
Were I to speak of *flank*, and *rear*, and *van*,
You'd find my tongue to wild confusion lead.

—Learn then but this: the King the centre kept;
MONTENOS, stately pine! led on the front.

The Stranger *bow'd* reply, in mute respect.
OSMIDA, gently pausing, thus resum'd:

The tender Twilight, which till now had look'd
With timid eye upon the martial plain,
Withdrew her beam, to follow distant day:
Night, oft invoc'd, advanc'd her ebon standard,
To which all Nature yields well-pleas'd obeisance:
But iron War, scornful of Nature's laws,
Makes Rest his captive, and the ear of Silence
Frequent invades, whilst from the throne of Night,
Coëval pow'r! she rules the drowsy world.
So *now* through *Arragonia's* streets, his march
—Unmeasur'd by the drum's imperious notes,
In awful pomp he takes. Balconies crouded
Show'r down their blessings as the soldiers pass,
Whilst thousand voices spend themselves in pray'r,
And thousand ardent eyes appeal to Heaven.

At length arriv'd towards the Eastern towers,
The army made a momentary halt.

E

When

When, lo! the holy Prelate, with a train
 Of cloister'd faints, barefooted, rob'd in white,
 And holding each a crucifix, advanc'd.
 Ye *more* than warriors, said the Man of God,
 Ye *Christian* soldiers, think *whose* sword you bear!
 The *barb'rous* nations of the earth, whose ears
 Were never blest with sounds of Gospel Truths,
 Have yet atchiev'd such wondrous deeds in arms,
 As will convey their names, with glory deck'd,
 To the remotest age in Time's dark womb.
 A thousand nations have for *freedom* fought,
 A thousand others for *revenge* have arm'd,
 And giv'n destruction to th'offending foe:
 To save their matrons from the brutal rape,
 Their daughters from Pollution's arms, have sent
 Victorious myriads to th'imbattled field.
 All these *you* fight for; but you fight for *MORE*—
 —You fight for *CHRIST*. See here! behold your Saviour!
 Torn on the racking cross! These wounds for *you*
 Were given. This blood—this sacred blood! for *you*
 Gush'd forth, and mingled with corruption. Go then!
 Bleed, agonize, and *die* for Him! Rapt Seraphims
 Are now preparing your celestial crowns:
 —Go and *atcbieve* them! Choirs of holy angels
 Now tune their golden harps, and hymns prepare
 To greet ye *conqu'rors* in the gates of Heaven:
 —Go! blessed soldiers—Go!

The Father ceas'd.
 From ev'ry mouth burst forth—as if *one* soul,
 One voice, through all the army reign'd—“We go!”
 Inspir'd thus by the Priest's heroic charge,
 Each seem'd to press to be the *earliest* victim;
 Their souls on fire, were eager to depart

The earthly sphere, and seize on their immortal crowns.
 Thus rapt, the foldiers pass; and through the gates,
 Like mists exhaling from the earth's moist bosom,
 Spread on the surface of the hostile plain.

The gates shut close their wide-extended jaws,

—Shut close for ever, on the valiant youths,
 Whose feet now leave them—to return no more:

But they, by *other* hopes than life inspir'd,

March on; whilst Night her curtain closer draws

To hide their progress from the watchful foe.

In vain the night her sable curtain draws,

And bids the stars keep hoodwink'd in their course;

For faithless Echo to the *Moorish* guard

Betray'd the distant sound of pacing steps.

From guard to guard the hasty signals fly,

And shoot like meteors through the dark expanse.

The Infidels, alarm'd, seem all in motion,

Whilst the faint quiv'ring lights, that lately serv'd

To guide the hunters in their dang'rous chase,

Now blaze and multiply, till all the camp

A vast illumination seems, that gilds

With dreadful splendor the surrounding gloom.

Our troops, undaunted, quicken as they tread,

And hasty marching grows to eager speed.

To arms! to arms! the scar'd besiegers cry.

Your arms are here! th'advancing foe replies,

—Thirsting to drench their swords in *Moorish* blood!

Silence, no longer useful, now gives way

To all the dreadful din that battle loves.

The haughty trumpet, and the vig'rous drum,

With the shrill fife's acuter voice, accord

To summon valour in the fearfull'st heart.

The *Moors* rush forth, impetuous and confus'd,

No orders thought on, and no orders heard:
 Some to the trench, some to the chariots fly
 To buckle to the shafts the frightened horses:
 —The restive steeds reject th'acustom'd yoke,
 Dash their fierce leaders wildly to the earth,
 Then, plunging, bound along the beamy plain.

Our troops had gain'd the ditch, and to the beards
 Of the besiegers—now *besieg'd*, advanc'd,
 Ere the first panic left their courage calm
 —The battle's fury in an instant spreads,
 And all its horrors rage mature at once.

The bows are useless; throat to throat they fight;
 —Foes mix with foes, ranks press on hostile ranks,
 Till each are lost, and form one dreadful whole.

Death never triumph'd as he triumph'd now;

—With *hasty* victims never was so gorg'd:

He who is killing, by another's slain;

And *he*, in finishing his blow, partakes

The fate he gives. Scarce had the armies join'd

Ere thousand souls had pass'd th'eternal bourn:

On ev'ry side bulwarks of dead appear

—Torrents of reeking gore. The blood of *Moors*

And *Christians* forms one common flood, and rolls
 Its heavy tide in stagnant streams along.

Say, Stranger, hast thou seen the warlike sports

Yearly presented in our vast Steccado?

Superior to the rest, the Bull-fight claims

Glorious pre-eminence. Forth from their dens

The bellowing monsters rush, and the earth rings

Beneath their haughty hoofs. The ireful foam

Runs from their churning jaws; their burnish'd horns

Now raise the earth, now proudly tost in air,

Challenge the waiting warriors to the combat:

The

The waiting warriors, ardent for the sign,
Dart on their foes : the lordly beasts evade
The well-aim'd spear, and, clad in native might,
Scorn the bright corslet and the nodding helm :
Onward they rush—whilst deathful fury bursts
In livid sparkles from their blood-red eyes ;
They gore the gen'rous steeds, their riders crush,
Or send them clashing through the dusty air.
Throughout the concave, sound the eager plaudits,
And boist'rous admiration speaks the joy :
At length the fav'rite bull—he whom the keepers,
For fire and strength, superior to the rest,
Had long mark'd out, is loos'd upon the plain :
All marvels cease the instant he appears ;
And what seem'd wondrous but a moment since,
Has now no tongue to speak the mighty act
—So much beyond all thought *his* deeds excell.
The glorious devastation of his peers.
Just so MONTENOS shone among the heroes
Whose bitter chastisement the *Moors* endured.
Where'er he mov'd, destruction mark'd his progress,
And death seem'd couchant on his pond'rous axe.

The Night, so dreadful ! lengthen'd out her hours,
As though she staid to view the battle's conflict,
Or hide its horrors from the springing day,
At length the glowing portals of the East
Disclos'd the Morn—in splendor she arose ;
But, as if grief-struck at the murd'rous scene,
Her face in humid clouds she instant wrapt,
And seem'd to weep in drops of sacred pity.
Yet Conquest ceas'd not, with her vig'rous arm,
To plant her banners o'er the reeking field :

—For *us* her banners wav'd—for *us* she triumph'd,
And Vict'ry sung loud Iö's for the Christians.

The *Moor*, now seeing that his scatter'd host
Had their chief leaders lost—their numbers wasted,
Like sifted corn before the driving tempest,
For quarter calls. His troops, upon their knees,
Yield up their arms, and Mahomet invoke,
To screen his worshipers from dreaded vengeance ;
But Christian soldiers war not for revenge,

Nor know to trample on a *vainquish'd* foe.

Their homage is accepted, and their chiefs,

With low'ring fronts, and hearts by malice gnaw'd,

Follow the victors in their march triumphant.

Strait to the city-gates they bend their course,

Where from the walls the holy priests had watch'd

The issue of the fight. There too, the Princess

—In horrors exquisite ! had pass'd the night.

Judge then her rapture, her exalted joy,

When she beheld, on their victorious march,

Betroth'd MONTENOS, and her royal Sire !

Forth to the plain—heedless of form, she rush'd :

Her Virgins follow'd, and the rev'rend Priests,

Led by the holy Bishop, form'd her train.

The day—as if she bore an *active* part

In all th'events her teeming hours brought forth—

Chac'd the dark clouds, unveil'd her radiant face,

And gave new glories to the scene she view'd.

The King approach'd—the Princess, at his feet,

Ador'd the mighty arm which thus restor'd him,

Loaded with laurels, from the deathful field :

Her valiant Lover, leading in his hand

The *Moorish* Prince, with eager pace advanc'd,

To claim *his* share of her enraptur'd welcome.
 Receive, he cry'd, a conquest which your eyes,
 And not my sword, achiev'd. Inspir'd by you,
Who could resist my arm? This princely foe,
 Who wonders acted, and whose arm deserv'd
 A *righteous* cause; by you, bright maid, subdu'd,
 Your victim I present. The sullen Prince
 Scarce deign'd to lift his eye; when, with a grace
 No fancy can pourtray, the gallant youth
 Made to his mistress this heroic gift.
 Oh fatal present! gift replete with woes!
 Why did not heaven in its mercy send
 Its winged shafts, and at that instant strike
 The royal Maid, where, fix'd with joy, she stood!
 Then had her breast, untorn with throbbing anguish,
 Sunk peacefully—alas! where roves my tongue!
 Let me, in order, lead you to the sequel.

It needless were my story to prolong
 In painting scenes your fancy will supply:
 The joyful entry, and triumphant feasts,
 Devout processions, and heroic sports,
 All these are fruitful themes, and would demand
 A time the waning night denies. In brief,
 The captive Prince a mighty ransom offer'd,
 With league of amity and lasting peace.
 The terms accepted, galleys were dispatch'd
 To bring the barter'd price of his redemption.
 Mean while he join'd the games, and seem'd to lose
 His barb'rous roughness in the toils of pleasure.
 Alas! in other toils his mind was caught;
 The Princess seem'd too lovely to ZORADOR,
 Whose sensual soul she touch'd with fiercest passion.

He

He dared to speak of love, and to herself
Vaunt his bold hopes; whilst he beheld approach
The day, which was to join in nuptial bands
The Royal Maiden and her lov'd MONTENOS:
The marriage sports already were prepar'd,
And yet the *Moor*, audacious! talk'd of love.
—Repuls'd with just disdain, he to the King.
His love-sick tale, with sullen port, address'd:
I am not us'd, he cried, to offer crowns,
And have them spurn'd, like *vulgar* lovers' toys.
Give me your Daughter! I'll give *her* a throne:
Dominions she shall have, to which your *Arragon*,
With all its boasted fields, and blushing vineyards,
Seems but a fertile *spot*; so vast the country
Whose sceptre I command! The King's firm answer
Shew'd the proud Infidel, his suit was vain;
And, that a *Christian* Princess, to a subject
More fitly would be match'd, than with the Monarch
Of wide-stretch'd continents—whose wretched Sons
Were taught to scorn the doctrines of a CHRIST.
ZORADOR's fury to such transports grew
At this destruction of his hopes, he seem'd
No longer man—His eye-balls glar'd with madness;
His foamy rage—like a tempestuous sea
Lashing her shores in vain—spar'd not himself:
His beard in frightful fragments strew'd the floor;
Whilst his inflated bosom rack'd within,
Without refunded from his barb'rous blows.
He curs'd, blasphem'd, and wept: his strength exhausted
Left him at length, as though a wakeful sleep
Had seiz'd his faculties, and numb'd the fire
Which fill'd his torrid veins. His slaves, who oft

Beheld

Beheld their lord a victim to himself,
Bore to his couch the prostrate harmless tyrant ;
And there, with trem'ulous lutes and vocal harmony,
In sweet enchantment woke him from his trance.
His haughty soul, that scorns all other laws,
Will yield to music all her boist'rous passions
—Hang on each strain, melt at each magic note,
And transient virtues catch from trilling airs.
Compos'd, at length, or masking what he felt,
Again ZORADOR fought the pensive King ;
Pardon, he cry'd, Oh Prince ! a wretch undone !
Forgive the frenzy of a heart unsteel'd
By disappointment's shocks. Nurs'd by prosperity,
By fortune follow'd, I had learnt—fond man !
That fate, that earth, that heaven, for me combin'd,
And from misfortune hallow'd my encircled head.
Your powerful arms, O King of *Arragon* !
First taught ZORADOR that he was a *man* ;
And now your Daughter's still more powerful eyes
Have taught ZORADOR, that he is a *slave*.
Master and tyrant of a thousand beauties,
Who court my passions, live for my delight,
I breath'd, unknowing that I had a heart,
Till cruel love, wrapt in Despair's wild torments,
Gave all its nerves a sense of curst existence !
I love—with agony—with madness, love !
Oh, spare me then the horror of a fight
My fiery brain splits but to think on ! Save,
—Father of her whose charms thus abject make me,
Save from the tortures of her marriage rites,
The heart which burns and wastes with hopeless ardors !
The ling'ring moon has number'd all the hours

That I allotted for my fleet's return :
 Soon as the eastern wind invades their canvass,
 The bellying sails will whiten all your channel,
 And their red streamers blush along your shores.
 My ransom paid, I quit these hostile walls,
 —Where my lost peace will stay enchain'd for ever.
 Then, whilst I bear my woes to distant seas,
 Then may the spoufals be triumphant sung,
 And not one wretch remain to curse the fount.

Here ceas'd ZORADOR ; whilst the melting King,
 Unable to withstand a claim *so* urg'd,
 Granted his royal suitor all he ask'd.
 The Moor, impress'd with thankfulness, retir'd,
 And the good Monarch gave *Medina's* Heir
 Command to curb his warm, impetuous wishes,
 Until his rival fought his native skies.

The shifting winds soon wafted to our ports
 The *Moorish* squadron. To the capital
 The fleetier camels bore the various treasures
 Meant for redemption of their captive Prince.
 Stuffs, ingots, ivory, form'd their precious burden ;
 Carpets of *Persia*, hangings wrought with gold,
Muscovian fables, scarves enrich'd with pearl ;
 Silk robes, by *Grecian* damfels taught to glow
 In flowers of vivid tints, and buds so prompt,
 They seem'd to blow beneath the gazer's eye ;
 Sabres with glitt'ring hilts of curious art,
 And scymeters whose sheaths di'monds illum'd,
 And sanguine rubies dy'd ; all these were borne
 In pompous march, through *Saragossa's* streets ;
 Whilst haughty courfers, from *Arabia's* hills,
 Champing gold bits, adorn'd with sumptuous housings,

Or

—Or bearing Turkish tents of gaudy drapery,
 Shut, from the wonder-loving croud, the long procession,
 And now approach'd the joyful, wish'd-for morn,
 Whose breath upon our happy plains the *Moors*
 Were doom'd to leave. ZORADOR, with such port
 As disappointment gives to tumid spirits,
 Made to the King and Princess his adieus.
 He left the city with a train of slaves,
 Shedding profusely, as they pass'd along,
 Rich showers of gold upon the gaping rabble,
 —Whose venal voice pierc'd Heaven with "Live ZORADOR!"

Soon as the tidings of the *Moors'* departure
 Our speedy couriers brought, the word was given
 To make all ready for the royal marriage.
 Raptur'd MONTENOS, madd'ning with his bliss,
 Could scarce support the intermediate hours
 That led, with lagging steps, the nuptial morn.
 The nuptial Morn arriv'd—rous'd from her slumbers
 By the shrill voice of silver clarions, join'd
 By the soft hautboy, the seductive lute,
 And sweeter pipe of choral maids, symphonious.
 Forth from the palace to the church, through streets
 With carpets laid, and myrtle garlands hung,
 The glad procession led its length'ning train.
 The King, beneath his canopy of state,
 Preceded by his guards, first object mov'd:
 Next to his suite the Princess, blushing, follow'd;
 Her train upheld by twenty noble maids,
 Whose beauty, in their snowy robes, seem'd chastity
 Incarnate. Next, at distance—as of rank
 That yet allow'd not of a royal state,
 MONTENOS walk'd, succeeded by the court.

The

THE MAID OF ARRAGON.

The King had almost reach'd the holy portals,
 When from the croud a youth advanc'd, who caught
 Each wond'ring eye. His face, a mask—design'd
 For youthful beauty, hid. His airy form
 Seem'd worthy such a face. His habit tiffue,
 Embos'd with purple studs. His flowing hair
 With knots of pearl was ty'd, and on his head
 A garland bloom'd. An iv'ry flute he held,
 Through which he breath'd such melting, touching, strains,
 That Harmony herself had staid to listen.
 As he approach'd, the soldiers clear'd his way,
 Till in the front before the guards he stood.
 The Princess came, whilst he, with rev'rence low,
 And softer breathings, seem'd to greet her presence.
 She pass'd; the Bridegroom came—in quicker notes
 He bad his music flow; and, forward stepping,
 Offer'd, with courteous air, the tuneful pipe.
 MONTENOS, smiling, stretch'd his hand, when—horror!
 His breast receiv'd the flute, which hid a poniard—
 —A second blow, ere thought could be recall'd;
 The third, the murd'rer on himself bestow'd,
 And well'ring dropt into the arms of Death.

Astonishment usurp'd each vital faculty,
 And rooted all who saw the bloody deed.
 The Bridegroom, sinking on th'affassin's corps,
 Rous'd from their trance his horror-struck attendants;
 Whilst the chill sounds of Death! Montenos! Murder!
 Fled to the wretched Maid—almost a wife.
 Not daring to demand the cause; her pulse,
 Stopt by congealing fear, forbore its office,
 And a kind stupor hid her from her woes.

Back to the palace, now, the dying Bridegroom,
 By Knights in hymeneal robes was borne,
 Whilst others dragg'd his murd'rer's mangled corps,
 To search for motives to the cruel deed.
 His mask unclasp'd, disclos'd a well-known face
 —A mute he was, and in ZORADOR's train.
 A fiend-like scroll, conceal'd within his vest,
 Develop'd all the murd'rous hell-born project.
 These were its words: " 'Tis not the slave, but I,
 Who give the blow. *Vengeance*, if not my *love*,
 Shall be appeas'd. Learn, King of *Arragon*!
 Learn both to know and dread the scorn'd ZORADOR!"

Such were the lines which bore the stamp of fate,
 The lovely victim of the *Moor*'s revenge,
 Breath'd not a word, but strain'd his beamless eye
 To find the object that his heart's last pulse
 Ador'd—not seeing her, they seem'd to shut
 All others out—and Death, with hasty seal,
 Clos'd their dim lids in everlasting sleep.

Here paus'd the Virgin, as immers'd in thought;
 The story, fraught with woe, had cast a shade
 Of deeper sorrow o'er her pensive brow:
 Her lab'ring bosom sent forth heavy sighs,
 And her sad mind seem'd lost in one idea.
 The Knight, who eager grew to know the tale
 She promis'd of *herself*, presum'd at length
 To bring her recollection to the point;
 At which her rosy lips their portal clos'd,
 And ceas'd to charm him with their touching accents.

I will not, Stranger! said the fair narrator,
 Tax your attention with events unneedful,

H

The

26 THE MAID OF ARRAGON.

The Court's distress, the sorrow of the King,
The Bride's, th'unwedded Bride's, forlorn distraction,
Long tedious months led round their joyless suns,
Ere comfort beam'd upon her widow'd heart ;
Nor *tben*, till, at the tomb of her lost Lord,
Her solemn vows she made, never to hear
A lover's soothing tale ; but, in virginity
Perpetual, wait the hour that should unite
Her faithful spirit with her murder'd Lord's.

This duty paid, a dawn, like that of peace,
By soft degrees illum'd the mourner's mind.
The Court, prompt in expedients to divest
Misfortune of her stings, ransack'd all pleasures,
Invented fresh delights, new joys invok'd,
For their sweet antidotes to pois'nous grief.

Thus had two years their slow-revolving hours,
Brought to the great account ; when from the east
A dark portentous cloud, lab'ring with ills,
Pregnant with thousand woes, obscur'd th'horizon,

ZORADOR—he whose soul from inmost hell
Was sent to scourge the earth—not gluttet yet
With all the horrid joys that wait on vengeance,
Not yet forgiving our triumphant arms,
Which shear'd the laurels his whole life had reap'd,
—Again came pouring, like a mighty deluge,
To overwhelm the land in lasting ruin.

He came.—Why should I lengthen out my tale ?
Our nation's force, oppos'd to the *Moor's* army,
Was kindling torches to obscure the sun.
Again we saw them hover on the hill :
Again we saw—like famine-bringing locusts,

Their

Their hosts descend, and spread upon the plain.

No parly, as at first, they would allow :

Their batt'ring-rams the messengers they us'd ;

—Arrows and catapults, their *killing* words.

A dreadful day our troops sustain'd the siege,

And fill'd the breaches with their slaughter'd foes.

At length, a billet on a javelin's point

The ramparts pass'd, denouncing rape and sackage,

If stubbornly our citizens delay'd

To own ZORADOR conqueror and king.

The threat effected all the *Moor* had hop'd,

And *Aragon's* grey Monarch was abandon'd

By those whose rights he'd guarded with his blood,

—By those his smiles had cherish'd, and his honours grac'd.

The throneless Sov'reign, when he saw his gates

Open their faithless jaws t'admit the foe,

Rush'd, in distraction, to his Daughter's chamber :

Ely ! let us instant fly ! he gasping said ;

The *Moors* have vanquish'd, and my Child's a slave,

Their standards now insult our conquer'd streets,

And curst ZORADOR will not long delay,

Within my palace walls t'assert his rights.

Come then, my Daughter ! left dishonour find thee,

And kill thy parent with a thousand deaths !

The Princess, whom affliction had subdu'd,

And taught a firmness stranger to her years,

Grasp'd her lov'd Father's hand—Lead me, she cry'd,

Where Providence ordains ! my duteous steps

Shall ever follow yours, soften your path,

And cheer, to life's last sigh, your rugged journey.

A golden casket, as she spoke, she seiz'd,

That held, till now, a hoarded useless treasure ;

And

And through the galleries, with breathless haste,
And step precipitate, follow'd the King,
—Unknowing to what corner of the earth
To point their feet, or whom they should intrust
With their advent'rous flight. A faithful Lord,
In this sad exigence, with cordial words,
The royal fugitives thus met and cheer'd.
“O Sire! from *Arles* take the only duty
That stormy fate now suffers him to pay:
My horses wait, close to the garden walls,
With trusty knights to guide you to my castle.
Dreading the worst, I had prepar'd this refuge,
When the fell *Moor* began his fierce assault.
For me, I'll stay and greet, with smiles deceitful,
ZORADOR, whom I hate, to ward, if possible,
What further ills his malice may devise.”
The King embrac'd, with fervent gratitude,
The noble youth—and follow'd where he led.
There a close chariot, harness'd and attended,
Waited to bear them from the dang'rous spot.
The flying steeds seem'd conscious of their office,
And instant cleft the air with eagle swiftness.
Mean while the *Moorish* troops rush'd through the gates,
And on our bulwarks fix'd their haughty standards.
No terms the citizens obtain'd, but those
Of vassalage and uncondition'd slavery;
Whilst their chief officers were instant sworn
To be allegiant to the swarthy Infidel.
Mean time, with speed, towards the royal palace,
As to his home, *ZORADOR* bent his course;
Vaunting, that now the *Christian* King should, kneeling,

Ask him to wed the Daughter whom he woo'd
With offer'd thrones, and was, with scorn, rejected.
But, when he found no Sov'reign to insult,
No Princes to affront with odious passion,
His furious transports made a thousand victims.
The Nobles' houses were with strictness search'd;
The churches, monast'ries, were all defil'd
By the unhallow'd infidels, in vain.
Three days the search continu'd, when the *Moor*,
Foaming with disappointed pride, made oath,
That, if the Princes in eight days appear'd not,
The convents-walls should to the ground be ras'd,
And their pure vestals fate his savage soldiers.

These dreadful tidings to the King and Princes
The faithful ARLOS sent. "My castle walls,"
He said, "no longer will protect my Sov'reign.
The church itself will aid the keen pursuit,
—Deeming it better that one royal Maid
Should feed the lust of a detested tyrant,
Than that their holy virgins should become
The prey of the licentious soldiery.
Fly then, my Prince! The loyal Knight, whose hand
Presents this testimony of my faith,
Will to a secret spot (where he himself
Asylum found) attend your wand'ring steps;
—Not wand'ring long! for surely Heav'n, that tries
The virtue which it loves, will reconduct you
To your lost people's arms, and rightful throne."
The darkest robe of night o'erspread the hemisphere,
When at the castle GONZALES arriv'd.
The royal pair, in humble weeds disguis'd,
Instant forsook the hospitable roof,
And sought untravell'd wilds, and gloomy deserts.

The spirits of the King, weigh'd down with sorrow,
 Had sunk beneath accumulated ills,
 Had not wife Heav'n endu'd his Daughter's mind
 With strength to bear *her* griefs, and cheer her Father's.
 With tender talk the tedious way she shorten'd;
 And, when exhausted Nature ask'd recruit,
 Hymn'd him to sleep beneath umbrageous trees.
 A whole day's sun beheld her duteous cares:
 The moon arose, and still they journey'd on;
 But the succeeding sun, with earliest beam,
 Guided the travellers to a forest's verge.
 Here GONZALES the steeds unrein'd, and drove,
 In envied freedom, to a neighb'ring mountain,
 Lest their betraying hoofs should guide pursuers
 To the asylum of the hunted King.
 In the wood's centre they a cottage found,
 Form'd, by Misfortune's hand, of humble clay:
 Two rooms it had, in each a rustic bed;
 For stately chairs, a bench; a rough-hewn table,
 That ne'er with other dainties had been fill'd,
 Than labour cull'd from the surrounding herbs;
 Or from the vines—that in the desert air,
 With their delicious burdens long had swell'd,
 Nor found one tempted hand to ease the load.

Such the retreat the fugitives had found.
 Adieu to gilded roofs, and chorded minstrelsy!
 Adieu to greatness, and unhealthful pomp!
 The winds now rustle through their straw-crown'd cot,
 And birds, with wild-note sweet, compose their concert!
 Full seven slow moons have turn'd their monthly orbs,
 Since GONZALES the cottage left, and since
 No human sound, but their own pensive tones,
 Have reach'd the Princess and her Father's ears.

What

What can I more? If my eventful tale
 Hath touch'd the chords of pity in your heart,
 And swell'd the sympathetic tear—soft tribute!
 By gentle minds, to sorrow ever paid,
 —Know, 'tis no stranger's woes I have related;
 I am the object of my own sad story—
 It is the Princess speaks—

Enough! exclaim'd
 The Knight, springing with ardor from the bank,
 Enough! our prize is found! and wealth and rank,
 And bright ZULEDA's smiles, are now DE COURCI'S!
 Thus speaking, to his lips he fix'd a bugle,
 Whose piercing sounds ten thousand echoes bore
 On airy wings, through the surrounding woods.
 The signal heard, six *Moors* obey'd its voice,
 And spurr'd their horses headlong through the glades.
 For these OSMIDA stay'd not. The false Knight
 No sooner spoke his joy, than, like a fawn
 Who from the neighb'ring thicket hears the voice
 Of the fierce wolf—she bounding left her seat,
 And fled to safer shades. A starting star
 Less rapid cleaves the air, when *Ethiop* Night
 Shews on her wanton breast his lucid trail.

Meanwhile, the royal cottager, whom Sleep,
 Spight of his cares, had woo'd to her embrace,
 Broke from her tempting arms. He call'd OSMIDA,
 Lift'ning in vain, to hear her cheering voice,
 He started from his couch, and, rob'd in haste,
 Rush'd forth to seek her in her fav'rite haunts:
 Darting his fearful eye across the lawn
 On which their cottage stood, close on its edge,
 —Panting and breathless he beheld his darling,
 With all the little strength that age had left,

He hasten'd to receive her. What his dread!
 When at his feet he saw the Princess drop,
 Exclaiming, as she fell, in fainting voice,
 Father! ALMANZOR! King!—The fear-struck Monarch,
 Unable from the mossy grafs to raise
 Its lovely burden, sinking by her side,
 Strove by his tears, and fond paternal voice,
 To rouse her torpid sense, and wake her soul.
 Not guessing at th'extremity of woe,
 Which soon must burst upon his hoary head,
 He thought some frightful reptile had surpris'd,
 And chill'd, with female fears, her tim'rous mind.
 But, oh! how short a while his fate allow'd
 This soft delusion! Through the night's still air
 The sound of human voices, and the clank
 Of iron hoofs, reveal'd a scene at once,
 That almost shook his soul from her frail tenement.

The *Gallic* leader of the *Moorish* band,
 (And sure no foil but *Gallia's* could produce
 A Knight thus treach'rous, thus completely form'd
 To guide a project hatch'd in nether hell!)
 Mark'd with his eye OSMIDA's flying course.
 Courage! he cry'd—as the base slaves advanc'd:
 All our past trouble, and our long fatigues,
 This happy hour repays. OSMIDA's found!
 Found at the instant that my famish'd hopes
 Scarce lent a ray to guide me in the chace.
 When, through the tiffu'd thicket, to my eye
 The friendly moon reveal'd her, hope prophetic
 Call'd her OSMIDA—yet my eager tongue
 I dar'd not with that hope intrust, lest Fear
 Should draw her veil upon the dangerous truth.
 In prayer she was employ'd; which instant taught me

That

That piety must be the bait to snare her,

—So won her confidence, and read her heart.

Allab be prais'd! rejoin'd a bearded Infidel,

Freedom is ours—ZORADOR's favour thine!

But, *Christian*, art thou *sure* thou hast beheld

ALMANZOR's Daughter? One fair maid, alas!

We have already to our master borne

For her he fought, and scarce with life escap'd,

So fierce and rageful was ZORADOR's anger!

The Princess, *self*-acknowledg'd, said the Knight,

Fled from this spot, scar'd at my bugle's sound.

A cottage, somewhere in the sombrous forest,

Conceals the trembler, and her aged Sire.

I mark'd the road she took, and now will guide you

To those who will not hail us—*welcome* guests.

Thus speaking, he push'd onwards through the wood,

And soon espy'd the little peaceful dwelling,

In which, for seven long months, the exil'd King

Had sigh'd his anguish to the passing winds.

Upon the earth they saw the hoary Monarch,

Supporting on his knee the drooping head

Of his unhappy child: his hands were clasp'd,

And rais'd towards that Heav'n which now allow'd

Sorrow to drain her vial on his brow.

This moving picture, e'en DE COURCI's eye

Could scarcely see, with pity unsoften'd.

Skill'd in deceit, and hiding a bad heart

With all the polish learnt in faithless courts,

He, with an air so meek, approach'd ALMANZOR,

As though he sought him only to bewail

The sad events that shut him from the world.

The King, perhaps, had yielded for a moment

K

To

To the delusive hope his look inspir'd,
 Had not the group of *Moors*—who yet approach'd not,
 Explain'd the dreadful purport of the visit.

Unhappy Monarch! said the soft-tongued Knight,
 Much it afflicts me that my barb'rous fortune,
 From all *ZORADOR*'s court, *DE COURCI* chose
 T'explore the sacred spot of your retirement.
 Had not the tyrant at his hateful nod
 Devoted *Moors* enough, and callous slaves,
 Us'd to the work of infamy and guilt,
 But I, a *Christian* knight, must be selected,
 To guide an enterprise so curst?—Oh Fate!
 Thou never loadedst me with ills till now!

The King, experienc'd in mankind, saw through
 The thin disguise of this most florid speech:
 He saw the serpent in the spicy shrub;
 —He saw the villain in the gentle eye.
 Not deigning a reply, he bent his head
 O'er the reviving Princess. Oh, *OSMIDA*!
 Exclaim'd th'afflicted Prince, thy beating pulse,
 Thy dear returning breath is now unwelcome:
 Rather I'd see those eyes for ever clos'd,
 This flutt'ring heart fixt by Death's potent voice;
 Than thus receive thee back again to life.

The royal Virgin's scarce-recover'd faculties
 Announc'd themselves in fears: “Oh! let us fly,
 My Father!—let us fly!” she murmur'd forth:
 “We are pursu'd—the Knight! the wiley Knight!”
 Pursued, indeed! replied the weeping King;
 Pursued and caught. O! my heart's dear *OSMIDA*!
 They have us in their toils—we're lost! we're lost!

Rous'd at this dreadful sound, the waken'd Princess,

Starting,

Starting, threw round her eyes—they met DE COURCI'S!
 A grave-sent spectre, in the deep of night,
 Scarce gives such horror to the shrinking sinner,
 As did DE COURCI'S form, to shock'd OSMIDA.
 Speechless, she hid her face, and clasp'd her father;
 Who strove t'inspire a calm his heart difown'd.
 The polish'd villain, who the blackest crimes
 With *impoliteness* could not stain, withdrew,
 That the bewailing mourners, unrestrain'd,
 Might pour their anguish in each other's breast.
 —Vain were the task, to paint th'impassion'd scene
 Which grief, and fear, and thousand racking thoughts,
 With glowing horrors, all conspir'd to fill.

The *courteous* Knight, observing where he stood,
 That the first torrent of their grief was spent,
 Ventur'd again t'approach the wretched pair.
 Pardon, illustrious Prince! he cried, the slave,
 Whom harsh necessity, alas! compels
 To stop your converse with your beauteous Daughter.
 ZORADOR—*be*, who knows no law but *will*,
 The smallest breach of whose commands, the rack,
 Or more inevitable death awaits—
 —Ordain'd, that soon as your retreat was found,
 A moment to delay should not be giv'n;
 But instant! maugre circumstance, or tears,
 That we should bear to their forsaken home
 Th'unwilling Princess, and her royal Sire.
 Now, if it please you, we must leave this desert,
 For haunts more fitted to your royal rank.

This mock'ry of respect, return'd the King,
 To those whom you command, adds points to insult.
 Our masters you; then treat us as your slaves!

The only boon I can descend to ask,
Is, that my Daughter, in this fatal journey,
May not be torn from me. From thee! ah, no,
Precipitant exclaim'd the royal Maid.

Together let us go, whate'er our fate!
Still let my filial voice my Father cheer,
And pierce the night of his collected sorrows!

DE COURCI seem'd to pause, when strait a *Moor*,
Of port superior to the rest, thus answer'd—
It is our Sovereign's will, that you, fair Lady!
Should hold no converse with your princely Sire,
'Till your arrival in your native city.

Doubt not, but then, each boon you ask, and all
Your fruitful fancy can devise, our master,
Gracious to charms like yours, will grant with rapture.
When Beauty sues, he knows not to deny.

What then will be your Beauty's pow'r? You—

The King, impatient and enrag'd, broke in
Upon the *Moor*. Cease, *Saracen!* he cried,
Nor dare thus violate my Daughter's ears!
Or thou shalt find, that in a desert, old,

—Unarm'd, ALMANZOR is a King. Lead on!
And since high Heav'n ordains, thy impious Master
Should hold the balance of our fate, obey
His harsh command! tear us asunder! yes!

Drag from the old man's heart, the last sole joy
His woes had left to save him from despair.

Plunge me at once in horror's deep abyfs.

Not long—not long, my friends, will you afflict me:

A show'r of tears, that down his furrow'd cheeks

Upon the bosom of OSMIDA fell,

Ended a speech—which men steel'd by long use

Against

Against the touching voice of heav'n-born pity,
Could not unsoften'd hear; but strove to palliate
To their own hearts, in coarse-spun sophistry,
The baseness of their voluntary task.

Sprightly *Aurora* looking through the clouds,
Which blush'd with pleasure at her near approach,
Chas'd from the hemisphere the pale-ey'd moon,
—Who had so sweetly shone, she seem'd 'till now
The morning's counterfeit. But Oh! to misery
Whether the pale-ey'd Moon, or sprightly Morn,
Or Sun-fulgent leads the passing hours;
All, all alike, they undistinguish'd roll,
One cheerless chaos, one impervious gloom.

It to DE COURCI, and the wond'ring *Moors*,
OSMIDA lovely seem'd—how lovely now!
When bright'ning day disclos'd her to their view,
One blaze of charms—eharms of that tender cast,
Which sorrow did not fully, but become!
Her polish'd form was graceful as the antelope's;
Her air majestic, as the sailing eagle's—
When 'mongst the fleecy clouds he gently waves,
And views high *Skiddaw*, like a shrub below.
Her face a *Raphael* would have caught, to form
A young *Madonna*, bending o'er her Child
With brow serene, and love-distilling eyes.
Her locks—such locks as Nature only gives
Once in an age, to perfect some rare beauty,
Seem'd like a golden veil—part hung before,
Shading a polish'd neck; which look'd, between
The burnish'd threads, like purest ivory
Through gilded net-work: part the Zephyrs snatch'd,
Playing enamour'd in the beauteous toils:

The rest in dropping ringlets fell behind,
And kiss'd the foldings of her flowing robe.

Such was the Princess; whom a Moor now seiz'd,
And on DE COURCI'S steed securely fix'd.
A silken sash, held by the treach'rous Knight,
Pass'd through OSMIDA'S girdle, and enchain'd
The mourning Virgin, and her deadliest foe.
Upon another steed was plac'd ALMANZOR,
Behind a guiding Moor. This was the state
The kingdom's Monarch, and the kingdom's Heir,
Were now constrain'd to use. No pompous guards,
No blessing populace, no proud grandees,
Their steps attend;—but oh! how small *that* grief,
Weigh'd with the horrid fears, the tort'ring doubts,
Which fill their bosoms, and absorb their thoughts!

The leafy desert—which so long had seem'd
A cheerless prison to th' illustrious pair

—They quit, with aching hearts, and heavy sighs.
Its solitary shades—how welcome, now!
Its humble turf-form'd cot, its devious glades,
Its choral groves, they would with rapture greet,
And hail them, as the dear abodes of Peace.

But these they have for ever—ever left;
And soon the forest's verdant roof grows dun
Upon the distant eye. The eager Moors,
With spur and slacken'd reins, kept pouring on,
Leaving whole leagues obscur'd with floating dust.
The royal Prisoners, scarcely with a glance,
Can speak a thought, much less converse, and share,
With kind participation, each other's woe.

Thus they continued through untrodden wilds,
Whose savage echoes never yet had learnt
To imitate the cordial voice of man:

—The churning boar, and howling midnight wolves,
Had taught them all the language that they knew.
At length the Sun, behind the western mountains,
Hid his pervading eye: the humid *Eve*
Led on her deep'ning shades, to quench the thirst,
The ferv'rish orb had left, on plants and flow'rs.
The *Moors* now strain their wifful eyes,
To meet some woodland, or some shelt'ring cave,
In which to court their strength-restoring sleep.
The last they found—it seem'd t'have been the haunt
Of fierce banditti—or more peaceful home
Of some sequester'd hermit; for its floor
The chissel's edge had smooth'd, and its low roof
Was rudely fashion'd to a semi-dome.
Here the sad travellers were allow'd the rest
Which through the fervid day they'd ask'd in vain.
The Princess, whose soft limbs were not inur'd
To such extreme fatigue, sunk lifeless down,
Soon as her feet had touch'd the solid earth.
The aged King, with scarce *more* strength, approach'd
To catch his falling Child—The flinty floor
Receiv'd them both—*OSMIDA* and her Sire.

With care officious, the attending slaves
The duties of humanity perform'd.
The Princess they recover'd; and a spot,
With their own garments, spread, to form a seat
Less rig'rous than the rock, for its high inmates.
Parch'd corn, sun-candied grapes, and racy wine,
They plac'd, respectfully, before the King:
Exhausted Nature crav'd the cordial draught;
Whilst to her Sire's request *OSMIDA* yielded,
And of the patriarchal feast partook.

40 THE MAID OF ARRAGON.

DE COURCI and the *Moors* dar'd not resign
Their heavy lids to sleep, but in rotation,
Two, the cave's entrance guarded; and the third,
Plac'd near ALMANZOR, interruption gave,
Whene'er the royal Parent and his Child
Strove to beguile the melancholy hours
With such sad converse as their griefs allow'd.
This had ZORADOR order'd, lest OSMIDA
Should from her Father catch more fortitude
T'oppose his furious passion, than he thought
A female could possess. Celestial chastity
He held a phantom bred from Custom's laws,
And that the magic of licentious love
Could melt its airy form—for now he meant
T'affert a conqueror's rights, and place the Princess
—Not on a Throne, but 'mongst his fav'rite slaves,
And make her Sov'reign of his loose seraglio.

Constrain'd to silence; Sorrow's blest physician
Stole by degrees upon their aching eyes.
O soft enchanter, Sleep! why did Idolaters
Ne'er build thee temples? Thee, whose sweet dominion
Boundless extends, wherever Nature breathes!
Thee, in whose arms Anguish forgets her throbs;
Chill Want, the nipping blast; and wild Despair
Finds gleams of comfort.—I sing Pæans to thee, Sleep!

Scarce had the mettled courfers of the Morn
Brought her gay chariot to th'horizon's edge,
And coif'd the mountains with her ruddy gold,
—Ere prompt DE COURCI, and the watching *Moors*,
Flew to caparison their grazing steeds.
Returning quick, they rous'd their torpid fellows,

And

And last awak'd OSMIDA and the King.

What an awakening! Touch not, O my pen!

Upon the catching theme! Of woe enamour'd,

Thou'lt hang too long upon the tears, the sighs,

The grief-fraught words, with which they hail'd the day.

—Events more active ask thy little skill.

Some hours they had pursu'd their steady course,

When, from a coppice bord'ring on the road,

An armed troop rush'd forth. So quick their motion,

DE COURCI'S band, ere they beheld their danger,

Were in a circle drawn—more dreadfully portentous,

Than wand of witch or wizard ever form'd.

The gallant Knight, who at his girdle wore

Unwilling beauty, seem'd at once the object.

Three vizor'd warriors at his stirrups stood;

Two held their lances to his throat; the third

Destroy'd the magic zone which held the Princess,

And snatch'd her instant from DE COURCI'S side.

With such dispatch was this achievement made,

The Knight had scarcely drawn to save his prize,

Ere he beheld her ravish'd from his arms

—And at a distance from th'astonish'd troop.

Turning, with fury, on his foes—who thus

Had all his splendid hopes rest from his heart,

He rais'd his arm, and aim'd a pond'rous sword,

Where guiltless it could not have fall'n; when instant

His unpois'd body, with Herculean force,

Was to the earth propell'd: breathless he lay,

And trampling steeds soon fix'd him to the spot,

From whence th'unhappy youth ne'er rose again.

The *Moors*, undaunted at their leader's fate,

Sustain'd th'affailant's shock, as if resolv'd

Their pris'ners and their lives should both be lost,

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Or

Or undivided kept. Two forc'd their way
Towards the spot where, guarded by her Knight,
The Princess stood; three of the foe pursu'd,
And made the path which led to her, the road
To death inglorious. The remaining *Saracens*
Fought as those fight, who, knowing they must die,
Resolve the victors shall buy conquest dearly.
But he who at his crupper held the King,
More fiercely than the rest—more madly fought.
His fellows too hemm'd in the struggling Monarch;
And, turning to the Prince their horses haunches,
Form'd with their spears a threat'ning glory round him.
When he who held him—watching for the moment,
Broke from the rest, and on the distant winds
Seem'd borne away. The demon who presides
O'er evil acts, and aids the deeds that most
Partake of Hell—surely his steed impell'd,
And brac'd his sinews with unnatural vigor.
His fiery eye, darting o'er hills and plains,
Scarcely outstripp'd his hoofs; the vales, the woods,
His glance devour'd, were in an instant left
Behind his feath'ry heels, that onward prest—
Whilst the pursuing, stretching, mad'ning foe,
Beheld new hills, new plains, new woods, arise
Between their courfers and their ravish'd Prince.

Meanwhile OSMIDA, in amazement lost,
Beheld herself unchain'd, and yet not free.
Those who had held her pris'ner, she saw slain;
But who are these, who risk, thus gallantly,
Their lives for her and the dethroned King?
Perchance new masters; perhaps again they're slaves.
Scarce had this question, in her whirl of thought,
Had time to firm itself, ere at her side

She

She saw the noble ARLOS.—Hence! vain fears.
The magic touch of hope her bosom swell'd,
And confidence chac'd ev'ry doubt away.
Raising the snowy veil which hid her face,
She beam'd a smile upon the loyal Knight,
That in his mind o'erpaid ten thousand dangers.
Fly, my best ARLOS! said the charming maid,
(As at her feet he knelt) and save the King!
See where he fits, unarm'd, amidst his foes!
Were *be* in safety, all my thoughts were peace.
The Knight up-springing, staid not to reply,
But instant hors'd, spurr'd onward to his troop:
His troop he join'd, but not till the rich prize
He flew to save, was ravish'd from his hopes.
Three of the band he instantly dispatch'd,
To stop the progress of the flying *Saracen*.
The few remaining *Moors*, urg'd by despair,
Still madly fought, preferring present death
To the slow tortures, which they knew their Tyrant
Would fail not to inflict, on those who lost
The beauteous object of his brutal love.
Their wish they soon receiv'd, and their freed spirits
Sought the eternal shores. The Princess now
Remain'd sole object of the cares of ARLOS.
With eager speed he sought the trembling maid,
Who saw her Parent borne o'er distant wilds,
And in that sight lost ev'ry new-born comfort.
Her tears bedew'd the senseless earth; her cries
Rent Heaven, and her unconscious feet mov'd quick
Towards the course, in which she saw her Father,
ARLOS, in soothing terms, implor'd the fair-one
To moderate her grief. Doubtless, he cried,
The gallant youths, who now pursue the *Moor*,

Will not pursue the flying slave in vain.
 They know the mazy roads—each devious path,
 Each secret turning—and will meet the villain
 When least he can suspect his danger. Now,
 Sweet Princess! to my castle let me lead you.
 There, if not happier, yet at least securely
 Your tears you may indulge, and feed your sorrows.

Scarce sensible to what was urg'd, OSMIDA
 Allow'd herself once more upon a steed
 To be replac'd: her horseman, noble ARLOS;
 Who through morasses, underwoods, and roads
 Almost impervious, brought his royal ward
 In safety to his mansion. Oh! how blest
 This moment had appear'd, had the same roof
 That shelter'd her, been shelter to her Father!
 That solace wanting, others lost their taste.
 Her sorrows to suspend, ARLOS related
 Events that yet could not have reach'd her ear.
 The faithful GONZALES, he told the Princess,
 Suspected by ZORADOR, bore the rack
 With undiminish'd courage, nor confess,
 —Though life was promis'd, and immense rewards,
 The place of her retreat: that he, Lord ARLOS,
 By wiles and arts, the jealous Tyrant blinded,
 Who held him truest servant of the *Christians*.
 Thus, unsuspected, he had watch'd the roads
 Which led towards her forest; with his life
 To rescue from the *Moors* the royal fugitives,
 If fate malevolent should e'er betray them.
 Another tale in pity he with-held:
 That the curst *Moor*, insatiate in revenge,
 Had caus'd MONTENOS' Father, Duke *Medina*,

To die upon the block—on stale pretence,
That he had form'd a plot to wrest the crown.

His family he banish'd, their rich lands

Confiscate made—and yet the Tyrant liv'd!

As the sad Princess heard, with growing horror,
Repeated acts of cruelty scarce human;

The Knights return'd who had pursued her Father.

It was enough: she saw them pass the gates,

Without the King; no circumstance was needful;

None could her anguish lessen—none her woe increase.

Their tale scarce won attention. Much they talk'd

Of hot pursuit, and of the villain's speed;

—That once his flagging courser rais'd their hopes,

When sudden on a neighb'ring plain appear'd

A troop of *Spahies* in a mock engagement:

The *Saracen* gain'd vigor at the sight;

Whilst those who follow'd, measur'd back their road,

Knowing the ruin of their Lord inevitable,

Should they, his faithful vassals, be discover'd.

Vain were th'attempts of ARLOS, to dispel

The deep distress which seiz'd OSMIDA's heart.

The sweetest words, e'er fram'd by consolation,

Were spent upon the air. The young ELVERA,

Sister to ARLOS, lent her infant aid

To cheer the royal guest; and with soft prattle,

—Kissing the drowning roses on her cheek,

Strove to divide her sorrow-fixt attention.

But, oh! her Father was a wretched captive;

What could abate the anguish of that thought?

In vain surrounding slaves watch'd ev'ry motion;

In vain the cielings rose on stately columns,

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Forcing

Forcing their grandeur on the awe-struck eye;
In vain the downy beds invited rest,
Beneath rich canopies imbos'd with gold.
Dearer the russet pillars of the forest,
Whose meeting branches canopied the earth
Where stood her lonely cot. Oh! dearer far
The humble couch on which her Father's head
Securely rested; where her ready hand
His pillow smooth'd, and filial cares excited
Sweeter slumbers! Who, now, will watch his sleep,
Or sooth his griefs to rest? Who waits his waking,
To cheer, with tender voice, the lengthen'd day?

So spoke the heart of the unhappy Princess.—
Now to the hospitable cares, her fate affords,
We leave the Mourner, and pursue the King.

E N D O F P A R T I.