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TALES OF THE HAREM.

TALES

OF

THE HAREM.

I. THE WITCH OF HIMLAYA.
II. THE CAVE OF GULISTAN.
III. THE HETÆRIA.
IV. THE INDIAN MAID.

So we'll live
And pray and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh
At gilded butterflies.

King Lear.

BY MRS. PICKERSGILL.

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TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE LADY ELIZABETH BELGRAVE,

THIS VOLUME

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

BY

HER LADYSHIP'S

OBLIGED AND OBEDIENT SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following pages are submitted to the public with considerable diffidence. They form part of a series of poems illustrative of Oriental scenery and mythology, which, should the present specimens be approved, may hereafter be published in a similar form.

The circumstances on which the Tales in the present collection are, for the most part, founded, are detailed in the notes at the end of the volume; by a reference to which the reader will be enabled to separate the real from the fictitious incidents employed by the author in the development of each story.

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ERRATA.

Page 37, l. 5, Should read—" Like to the ravening vulture's cries."

144, last line, for *where* read *were*.

TALES OF THE HAREM.

INTRODUCTION.

HARP of the East! thy powerful thrill
Might well some genial warmth instil,
And e'en the lowly Minstrel fire
With bolder hand to strike the lyre!
What though a northern sun must warm
Her simple lay, her fancy charm,
'Tis the same fount of fire whose rays
O'er Asia shine with vivid blaze,

Shed milder beams o'er Europe's vales,
Varied with showers and southern gales ;—
That power the Muse invokes again,
Which raised of old the thrilling strain
Of many an Eastern bard, while she
Learns their wild strains of minstrelsy,
That while in Fancy's path she strays,
She flowers may cull to deck her lays :—
Some of those gems which Eastern lore
Has strewed o'er Europe's colder shore—
That she may emulate the strains
Which erst were heard through Asian plains:
The deeds of martial fame to tell;
With Love's own power her lays to swell;
Sing nymphs as graceful as the pine,
Sweet as the rose, or jessamine,
In whose bright, wavy ringlets bound,
A thousand hearts are captive found,
While in each dark and sparkling eye,
Love's treacherous snares in ambush lie.

Yet, what were life but storm and gloom,
Robbed of the charm of Beauty's bloom?

That power, the rosebud's lovely hue
Could paint, and gem with glittering dew,
And tinge the ruby's roseate glow,
Crowning fair heaven's refulgent brow
With diadem of stars, whose light
Gems the dark veil of gloomy Night;
He to the sons of earth hath given
Love's sacred fire, terrestrial heaven!

THE HAREM.

LAND of the Free! where once the brave
Had proudly spurned the name of Slave!
Where Freedom erst in splendour shone
Her very name is scarcely known!
The bark as freely spreads her sails—
As freely blow the mountain gales—
The tiger, in his woody den,
Is still as fierce and free as then—
Far as the charmed eye can scan,
Nought seems degenerate save Man!
Where once the masters of the world
Destruction o'er their proud foes hurled,

And the famed Roman eagle soared,
The Moslem has his vengeance poured;
And where in prayer the Christians met,
Glittering is seen the minaret!

Now mirth from Stambol's towers has fled;
From many a lovely cheek and eye,
Which once such power and lustre shed,
(Ah! who might 'scape their witchery!)
Fair as the maids whose soft black eyes
Will bless the just in Paradise.
Lone Melancholy glides along
Where once resounded joy and song!
All—all is sad: the bright parterre
And gay kiosk now seem less fair;
For Stambol's lord bestrides his steed—
Beneath his blade the Giaour must bleed;
And who can tell, in that dread fight,
On whose lone head the shaft may light?

It's warrior train have left it's towers,
It's marble halls, it's perfumed bowers,
It's downy couches, gilded roofs,
For neighing steeds and clanging hoofs;
The lute's soft notes and dying strains,
For war's harsh sounds on battle plains.
Death marks their strides, for lo! unfurled,
The Crescent awes the Eastern world—
The angry meteor shines afar,
And hovers like a baleful star,
O'er peaceful vales which never knew
Till then the tints of blood's deep hue,
Which, ere those falchions shall again
  Rest in their sheaths, will dim their shine;
And helpless age may plead in vain;
  And maidens, even from the shrine,
Be borne away, and never more
View the dear plains they loved before—
For never yet did Moslem zeal
The heavenly touch of Mercy feel!

The splendid cavalcade has passed;
  Nor longer on the distance floats,
The trumpets' martial, hollow blast,
  Or the loud clarion's echoing notes.
The Harem's Queen, who shared the throne
With her Imperial Lord, is gone;
And in her train, a motley crew,
Of maids of every clime and hue,
Who in that change a glimpse might see,
A distant gleam of liberty;
For ne'er beyond that proud Serai,
Had their chained hopes once dared to stray.

And all was still in those high walls,
Save in the Harem's guarded halls;
And there were maids from every land
O'er which the Crescent waved command,
From all the East the young and fair
Of every clime were gathered there;

Some whom stern War had captives made,
  And to those domes so young were brought,
That they amidst their fetters played,
  Nor of their gilded cages thought;
Nor dreamed of other years, when free,
Unfettered as the Spring's light gales,
When wandering through their native vales,
Their sweetest song was Liberty.
Yet Memory o'er their thoughts would steal,
Teaching their youthful hearts to feel;
For there were some, whose pensive brows,
  Which nought illumined, seemed to tell,
That Love had claimed their secret vows,
  And bound them with a sorcerer's spell.

The sun's last rays were lingering still,
On vale, on stream, on woodland hill;
And ere in night those rays were set,
Glittered on mosque and minaret.

Sweet Eve' had poured her influence there,
  Luring them from their peaceful cells,
That they might chase the wizard Care,
  Who oft in gilded bowers dwells.
Maids from the West, with beaming eyes,
  Blue as the lily of the stream,
With clustering locks, whose golden dyes
  Vied with the sun's last setting beam:
And those of Yemen's leafy woods,
  It's palm-tree groves, it's lofty mountains,
With her who bathed in Teflis' floods,
  Fair as the Naiads of its fountains;
The dark-eyed girl from Indian groves,
Where bloom the fragrant flowers she loves,
Those which wreathed Camadeva's quiver,
Culled near her own pure, sacred river;
And those of Cashmeer's lovely vale,
  With the Circassian beauties strayed,
Wooing the fragrance of the gale,
  Which 'midst their flowing tresses played;

And many an eye, with thrilling glance,
  Shot through that twilight's gentle ray,
As oft, beneath the banian, dance
  The fire-flies at the close of day.
At that sweet hour the sun had fled
And sunk within his ocean-bed,
While Summer, on the eve's soft gales,
His tribute sent from flowery vales,
Like zephyrs borne upon the breeze,
From the bright isles 'midst India's seas.
On such a night as this, no eye
Ought to have gazed with apathy;
Yet, vain the hope, though all essay,
By every wild, fantastic play,
To charm the long and tedious hours,
And even crown old Time with flowers.

Some mount aloft the buoyant swing,
As the young bird first tries his wing;

With shouts as loud, and mirth as wild,
As echoed e'er from mountain child;
Some twine the dance's mazy round,
To music's soft, melodious sound;
Others the lute's sweet notes prolong,
Or warble some enchanting song,
That e'en the bulbul on the spray,
Might envy the soft, thrilling lay;
And so some younger maidens thought,
As they their flowery garlands sought,
Each pressing to her own young breast
The buds her childhood loved the best;
And every spray of brilliant hūe
  Was gathered by the Hindoo slave,
That in the sunny vallies grew,
  Beside the Ganga's sacred wave;
And all those fragrant buds were there
Her nation's sacred bards declare
Around bright Cama's bow entwine,
Or on his barbed arrows shine.

The Arab sought those flowers like gems
From the mimosa's pendent stems,
And the young blossoms that delight
To close by day and bloom by night,
Sweet as the zephyr's spicy breath;
With these she formed her playful wreath.
The young Cashmeerian culled the rose,
That in her native Eden grows;
Dearer to her each shrub, though wild,
Her hand had gathered when a child,
Than the proud diamond's rays which shone
Upon her now resplendent zone;
And of those happier hours she thought,
When, on the first return of spring,
She there the garden's pride had sought,
Blithe as a bird on sportive wing.

Thus varied is life's brightest hours,
And thorns will spring 'midst sweetest flowers;

While Memory, e'en o'er pleasure flings
The deepest shadow of her wings—
Yet soon they fade, and brighter themes
Will mingle with Youth's fairy dreams;
And thus, to chase their gloom away,
Each sang some wild, yet plaintive lay.

THE INDIAN GIRL'S SONG.

I.

To our bowers let us haste,
  Ere the morning's light
From the garden has chased
  The tears of the night;
Let the jasmine fair
  In our wreath be seen,
And the rosebud be there,
  From her throne of green.

For the blossoms, they say,
Are more holy by far,
Plucked beneath the ray
Of the midnight star !

II.

And let those bright flowers,
When spangled with dew,
Which hang from our bowers
Of roseate hue.
With the champaca sweet,
To braid our dark hair ;
While their perfumes all meet,
And are blended there.

For the blossoms, they say,
Are more holy by far,
Plucked beneath the ray
Of the midnight star !

The song was o'er, yet still they sought
To chase away the demon, Thought,
And fly his spells for some short hours,
Revelling in music, mirth, and flowers;
Yet time with them, though time has wings,
They found he could not, would not fly—
For in the very courts of Kings,
Lurks the dark fiend, Satiety.
And, listless all, they soon agree
To seek a kiosk's still retreat,
Which o'er Marmora's dark-blue sea
Hangs its proud towers—the white waves beat
Against its base, and there to sit,
And gaze upon the waning moon;
It seemed as if the sea were lit,
And morning's beams would come too soon:
And many a heart was there, who well
Could feel that night's enchanting spell,
Which with soft tears dissolved the eye,
And sought the bosom's sanctuary.

One owned its power, an Arab maid,
  Who thought how oft, in Kerman's vales,
Under the date-trees' leafy shade
  She sat, to list her native tales—
And thus their pensive musing broke:
"Let us," she cried, "some spell invoke,
That we may this sweet scene prolong,
By legend wild or dulcet song;
For never did the moon's pale ray
More sweetly on the waters play;
And young Mehd Alia, with her lute,
Which should not at this hour be mute,
May sing a lay of sweet Cashmeer,
The long and lingering hours to cheer."

The young Cashmeerian gently bowed,
Her cheeks with soft emotions glowed,
When of that Vale her fancy dreamed,
The fairest, her fond bosom deemed.

O'er which kind Nature still had flung
Her flowery veil, or poet sung;
She strikes the chords with timid fingers,
And on the soft vibration lingers.

THE WITCH OF HIMLAYA.

THE CASHMEERIAN'S TALE.

CANTO I.

FAIR was the eve; the sun's last beam
Shone gently on the dark-blue stream,
Mingling his tender streaks of red
With the pure rays the pale moon shed.
Ne'er, save beneath an Eastern sky,
  Is seen so fair, so sweet an hour,
When Nature's self rests silently,
  In soft repose, on shrub and flower;

Nought broke that lovely stillness, save
The distant plashing of the wave,
When the light bark, with dripping oar,
Darted to reach the distant shore,
Or music's thrilling notes, that fell
On the cool breeze, and woke a spell,
So heavenly, that the listening ear
Had thought some wandering spirit near.

Perchance the sweet sitara's chords
  Were struck by one who felt the pain
That never could be told by words,
  But floated sweetly in that strain.
None ever viewed a scene so fair
As those who haply lingered there,
And marked th' horizon's vivid glow,
The mountain's summit clad in snow;
And where the broad-leaved plantain shone
Near the slight palm-tree's fan-like crown,

The banian's hospitable shade,
By reproductive branches made,
Lending its kindly shelter still,
From noontide heat or midnight chill;
Groves where the feathery cocoa grew,
Glittering with eve's own lucid dew.
A thousand birds on sportive wing,
  Made vocal every bending spray
With varied notes they seemed to sing
  Soft vespers to the parting day;
The pale moon there her crescent hung,
And o'er the waves a splendour flung,
More mild and lovely than the beam
The mid-day sun flings on the stream.

'Twas on the eve the Hindoos lave,
Like sea-born Rhemba, in the wave;
Their solemn rites, and spells prepare,
Invoking Beauty's goddess there,

In many a wild and deep-toned dirge,
Resounding o'er the sacred surge.
There troops of girls, with tresses flowing,
In youth's first pride of beauty glowing,
Plunged in the tide, in youthful play,
Dashing around the river's spray;
Their slender, polished limbs they lave,
Like Naiads on the liquid wave.

One, lower down the stream retired,
In richer, costlier garb attired,
Her lone devotions there to pay,
Lit by the moon's auspicious ray;
Her flowing veil was thrown aside,
  Unbound her dark and shining hair,
And, ere she touched the silvery tide,
  She cast her votive offerings there.
Those who had seen her well might deem
She was the goddess of the stream,

When first she, from the foamy sea,
Rose Beauty's own bright Deity!
One sole attendant, near the shore,
  A dark-eyed youthful Hindoo slave,
Wrapped in her arms an infant bore,
  To bathe in Ganga's holy wave;
For in the health-bestowing stream,
  Beauty's first germ was said to glow;
For this, beneath the moon's pale beam,
  She offered up her lonely vow;
Yet, ere on that still, heavenly night,
The votaress had performed each rite,
When gently, by the zephyr's breath,
Down the blue stream was borne a wreath
Twining around a vase, and there
Reposed a lovely babe, as fair
As she who owned that mother's care.

The couch was wafted by the wave
Where stood the matron and her slave;

It was as though, on that bright river,
  Fair Maia's son, in all his pride,
With flower-bound bow and rosy quiver,
  Triumphed once more upon that tide;
And so that fair enthusiast deemed,
That one so young and lovely seemed
Sent there by some celestial power,
That she might shield it in her bower.
"Novara," cried the votaress, "see
A present from the Deity
Who haunts this sacred stream, and hides
The spar-wrought caves below the tides!"
The young slave to the grassy shore
Quickly the couch and infant bore;
And gently at her feet she laid
On the green turf the sleeping maid

The matron pressed her own loved child,
Against her heart, then fondly smiled;

And raised her dark and lucid eye
With rapture to the cloudless sky.
" Hear me, Novara, hear me now,
While thus I consecrate my vow :—
Before yon starry host of heaven,
That she this night the waves have given
To me, shall ever be as dear,
As she who fondly nestles here ;
And may the Deity, whose power
We invocate this holy hour ;
May heavenly Rhemba hear my prayer,
Oh ! may these children be as fair,
As when she on her lotus' throne,
In dazzling majesty first shone !"

The matron o'er the infant hung,
While to her breast her own babe clung ;
Marking how sleep its eye-lids closed,
While it on fragrant flowers reposed.

Novara knelt her down to take
  The babe from where it lay enshrined,
When from the vase a coiled snake
  Darted its length, and quickly twined
Around the other cherub's breast,
Its deadly fangs the reptile prest
In its life's blood, the vital stream
Once sullied, the transparent beam
No more illumed its death-glazed eyes,
But the bent lily droops and dies.
One shriek, one dreadful shriek resounded
O'er the calm waves, their silence wounded.
So deep, heart-rending was the cry,
As though each sense of misery
With life and reason, all were fled,
And the last quivering pulse was dead;
And never yet was seen a sight,
More sad than that on Rhemba's night!

The lonely Hindoo slave stood there,
Like one entranced in mute despair;
Well might she doubt the fearful scene
Aught but a feverish dream had been;
For she, who in her infant bower
That morn had bloomed the loveliest flower,
Was that pale lily, now that lay
To unrelenting death a prey,
While the wild matron's once quick eye,
Now listless gazed on vacancy.
In her was quenched the source of tears,
To her were dead, both hopes and fears.
She sat upon the grassy ground,
Her flowing tresses all unbound,
And all was lonely, sad, and wild,
Save in her couch that lovely child;
And nought but her low, feeble cry,
Disturbed that hour of misery.

The evening's solemn rites were o'er,
Those groups had left the Ganga's shore;
The moon had ceased the waves to light,
The scene was changed to gloom and night;
Yet hung the mournful Hindoo slave
O'er those her vows and prayers would save,
Yet vain she there her vigil kept,
Nature around in silence slept.

And was that lady all alone,
Of all her train was there not one?
None but that lowly slave to share
In the enthusaist's wild despair?
Yes, in that noble matron's hall
A hundred slaves obey her call,
She had not there been left; but she
Had made a vow in secrecy
And lone devotion, thus to lave
With her loved infant in the wave;

When on its stream pale Chandra's light,
First shone on Rhemba's festal night—
For this she with one slave alone
Had to the river's margin gone,
Where the stern messenger of fate
Left her for ever desolate.

She still sat on the lonely shore,
Like one who in this world no more
Shall ever feel, or joy or sorrow,
Shall ever see a brighter morrow.
Yet all amid her gestures wild,
Her eye was fixed on her lost child,
As though there shone one fading beam,
A link in memory's frenzied dream.

And was that cherub left to die,
When her frail bark the shore had won?
Would no one hear her plaintive cry,
Were all who might have soothed her gone?

No! there was one, who hovered near;
Like pity, sent to chase the tear
From sorrow's eye—and soon was prest
The wave-borne child, to her fond breast!

The slave is roused, her trembling eye
Rests on the stranger mournfully;
And in that hurried glance a ray
Of joy has chased her tears away.
"Zeneib!—Novara!" they exclaim,
Both hear a loved, a well-known name;
And to a sister's bosom now
Novara prest her aching brow.

Touch but one link of memory's chain,
How soon the heart will beat again,
Bringing before the mental eye
The vivid tints of infancy;
And hope once more her eye illumes,
While reason its firm sway resumes.

The harrowing tale is quickly told—
How could she meet her lord's stern eye?
Or to his ear the truth unfold
Of his loved infant's destiny.
Ah, who shall tell him—she who ever
Met his fond gaze with pure delight—
That reason's light shall never—never
Illume again her soul's dark night!

The babe has found a watery grave,
Under the river's silent wave.
They bear the lady to her dome,
Where morn had seen her young and fair,
Yet ere night's zenith was that home
A refuge for her mind's despair.—
Her cheek is robbed of all its bloom,
Her eyes are sunk in rayless gloom;
And never beam those dark eyes, save
They rest on her the Ganga's wave
On sea-born Rhemba's eve first gave.

All—all was hid of that sad night
Save the lost matron's early blight,
For none but those young slaves could tell,
How fate's dark withering mission fell.
On her lord's ear the maddening tale
Fell, like a pestilential gale;
That a fierce serpent from the tide
Had darted in his gilded pride
Against his lady's beauteous form,
And thus produced her bosom's storm.
And many a wild and bitter tear
He shed for her he loved so dear;
And little did his fancy deem
His own babe slept beneath the stream.
The one he cradled on his knee,
  Was not the same that eve they bore,
In Rhemba's proud festivity,
  In infant-beauty to the shore.
For no two stars had ever been
  More like, than were those early flowers,

No twin-buds ere more like were seen,
Though plucked in the same fairy bowers.
The year's quick circle glided by
Unmarked by that sad mother's eye,
'Till on the sacred river's tide
The echo of the same lay died;
And glittered there the same pale beam,
Which once had lured her to the stream;
She stole from her attendants' care,
Whose duty still had watched her there:
And wandering to the Ganga's side,
Where her own hapless infant died,
She there a lay so plaintive sang,
'Till echo with the cadence rang.
She sat her down beside the tide,
It seem'd as though at the same hour
Her own lost infant there had died,
Reason again resumed its power,
And with it woke sad memory's dream,
Of her who perished near that stream:

SONG.

Ah, heard ye the soft breeze of spring!
On the bright zephyr waft its sigh,
While revelling on its balmy wing,
On the cool trembling waters die—
'Twas on that trembling zephyr's sigh
Was borne my infant's lullaby!

Ah, heard ye the sad pensive moan,
Of the fond ring-dove for her young!
And in that mournful plaintive tone
Their lowly dirge that mother sung—
And in the ring-dove's mournful cry
Was sung my baby's lullaby!

Ah, hear ye the sad vulture's note,
And the dark owlet's flapping wing,

On the wild coming tempest float,
When earth and sky are darkening—
'Tis in the vulture's hollow cry
Resounds my infant's lullaby!

No sooner was the sad lay o'er,
Then plunging from the river's shore,
She quickly found a peaceful grave
With her lost darling in the wave.

Within the Rajah's princely dome,
Sorrow alone can find a home;
For there no more shall pleasure smile,
Or music the sad hours beguile;
Nor in its hospitable hall
Be spread the splendid festival.
No longer the cool sherbet floats
Amongst the guests in cups of gold,
Nor to the soft sitara's notes
The bard recounts the tales of old.

The ruddy plum of fair Cashgar,
With the pomegranate of Tatah,
The luscious fruits of Samarcand,
The produce of each distant land;
No longer shall together vie
In that high lord's festivity.

The almas' bounding steps no more
Spring o'er the tesselated floor;
Nor do their beaming eyes illume,
Tresses which emulate the plume
Of the wild raven's jetty wing.
Nor are the gold bells tinkling
Around their ivory ancles bare—
But all is gloom, and silence there.

The prince has left his stately towers,
And leads to war his vassal powers;
Those plains, where once his lady's eye
Oft shone, heard not his bosom's sigh.

His home retains not now a spell,
The voice is mute he loved so well;
He only hears her funeral dirge,
Ring wildly o'er the hallowed surge;
Like the ravening, the vultures' cries,
  In the parched desert o'er their prey;
Or helpless traveller who dies
  Struck by the simoom's scorching ray.

And soon the yellow scarf was waving;
The rajpoots' brave and warlike cry,
The battle's deadliest slaughter braving,
Leads on to death or victory!
And many a year that Rajah staid,
Far from his lonely orphan maid.
Those slaves that in their lady's bower,
Had watched her in her frenzied hour,
Tending her footsteps, wayward, wild,
Were left to guard the lovely child.

And one young boy, the Rajah's heir,
With her alone divide their care.
So beauteous was her infant brow,
It was as though the maniac's prayer,
When o'er the waves she made her vow,
Was doubled on that maiden fair.

Thus reared in solitude, alone,
Unmarked this tender lily shone;
Save that her youthful couch beside,
A lofty form would sometimes glide,
Like a nocturnal, fearful sprite,
In the deep shadowy hours of night.
For near the maniac's favorite room,
None ever ventured in the gloom
Of evening, for the slaves would tell,
How when its lengthened shadows fell,
Along the high-roofed corridor,
Or gleamed upon the marble floor,

Their lady's spirit wandered there,
'Till it would melt in viewless air!
Yet here, all desolate and wild,
Was reared the orphan wave-borne child;
Yet in her hours of childhood's play,
One phantom ever crossed her way,
Whose flashing eye and towering form,
Gleamed like a meteor in the storm.
Who oft at eve her steps would lure
To some deep solitude, secure
From the approach of curious eyes;
And there such thrilling melodies
And magic strains her ear would meet,
So sad, and yet so wildly sweet,
That the mysterious stranger still,
Guided her footsteps at her will.
Nor dread, nor fear her bosom felt,
But at that mourner's tears would melt,
And when she to her heaving breast,
With all a mother's fondness, prest

Her youthful form—that raptured eye,
Spoke a fond mother's extacy.
Yet Aza never knew her name,
Nor whence the wandering footsteps came
Of her, who with such magic skill
Taught her the lute to touch at will;
So powerful was the sacred spell
  That o'er her youthful fancy swayed,
That from her tongue no accent fell,
  Their secret tie which e'er betrayed.

Sometimes the stranger in the gloom
  And shadow of the midnight hour,
Would meet her in the garden's bloom,
  Or in Novara's lonely bower;
Who on her youthful mind imprest,
To hide the secret in her breast,
For should it e'en be known 'twould ever
Her fate from her loved minstrel sever.

But few of all that lord's proud train
In those deserted towers remain,
To guard the absent Rajah's halls,
Without the lone Zenana's walls ;
Or on his princely heir attend,
To teach his arm the bow to bend,
To wield the falchion, stem the tide,
Or curb the war-horse in his pride ;
And fit the youthful Zelindah
For the fierce toils of sterner war.
Still would he, when the setting sun
  Was glittering both on stream and flowers,
And all his manly sports were done,
  Hasten to the Zenana's bowers ;
And from their sager counsels fly
To meet young Aza's laughing eye.

Childhood's sweet hours are like the spring,
Like the young bird upon the wing,

As evanescent and as fair,
Its wild pursuits as varied are;
Or the gay fly upon the stream,
Or the inconstant moonlight's beam.
Sometimes they through the garden's pride
  Would pluck each garland in their way,
Or climbing the steep mountain's side,
  Among its various pathways stray.
Thus the young pair together grew,
  Their pleasures and their cares the same,
Their hours of childhood quickly flew;
  To them no voice of sorrow came.—
But like the young birds ever gay,
Through the neglected garden play.
Still the fond boy would gently guide
Her footsteps, wandering by her side;
Climbing with venturous foot the tree,
  To reach the small bird's mossy nest,
Of its bright eggs a rosary,
  To string about her youthful breast;

Or fasten a small tinkling bell,
Around her slender swift gazelle,
That they might chase it o'er the lawn,
Ere that the rosy-footed dawn
Had brushed the morning dew away,
That glittered on each bending spray.

Such pure and happy hours as these,
So bright, were never made to last;
When, drooping, fades the young heart's ease,
The first, fond, fairy vision's past!
For he who formed her infant pride,
No longer wanders by her side;
His sire has sent a lordly train,
That his fond heart may press again
One link of love's divided chain.
His nerveless arm must now prepare
To wield the massive sword, and share
In the fierce conflict of the brave,
His native towers and plains to save;

For War, with all its deadly train,
Will e'en the fairest Eden stain;
Soon may the Moslem trample there
The sacred shrines and temples fair:
And Aza, too, must quit the dome
That long had formed her childhood's home,
And soon in other plains must dwell,
And bid to these a long farewell!

How lonesome is the young bird left,
Of it's first loved companion 'reft!
Those groves where once it's carols light
Resounded through a summer's night,
Robbed of it's young and tender mate,
Are to it's fond heart desolate.

'Tis eve; and Aza wandering roved,
Amongst the groves which once she loved;
In vain resounds the tinkling bell
Of her own lively, young gazelle;

In vain she tries her once-loved lute—
It's charm is gone, it's thrill is mute ;
For he who once had praised the lay,
From those high towers is far away ;
And every shrub, and every tree,
Awakes some chord of memory.
Her dark eye still is fringed with tears,
When on the sighing breeze she hears
Those sad, mysterious notes, whose swell
Ever upon her charmed ear fell,
As though the strains from heaven descended,
And with her very fate were blended.
She hastens to the lonely cell,
  Where she had oft the minstrel met,
When evening's darkened shadows fell,
  And the sun's lingering beams were set.

The stranger stood before her now,
With paler cheek, and sadder brow ;

She gazed upon the lovely maid,
  Her dark eye beamed a softer spell,
As she, in faltering accents, said,
  "I come to bid a last farewell!
Yet, nothing can the firm link sever,
  That binds me to your weal or woe;
We part—perchance 'twill be for ever—
  You now to other vales must go.
I read, in that inquiring eye,
'What can unite the destiny
Of youth, with one whose wayward fate
Seems now so sad and desolate?'
Yet, a far happier day may come,
When she who meets you now in gloom,
May then the mystery dispel,
Which hangs now, like a wizard spell,
O'er her sad life.—Farewell!—farewell!"

TALES OF THE HAREM.

THE WITCH OF HIMLAYA.

CANTO II.

BENEATH Himlaya's snow-clad brow,
  Where the dark forest's high tops frown,
And the loud mountain-torrents flow,
  'Mid hills which form its emerald throne—
Where the fierce eagle built its nest,
  And scarce the elk had deigned to dwell—
A wanderer chose a bower of rest,
  And fixed her lonely moss-grown cell.

So stern and wild it's aspect seemed,
  That with the Spirits of the Air,
Those who e'er sought her dwelling deemed
  She held nocturnal vigils there.
None knew from whence that stranger came,
Her clime, her faith, or e'en her name;
And those who saw her lofty form
  Climb the dread steep, or brave the flood,
Reckless of Winter's angriest storm,
  Called her the Wild Witch of the Wood;
For she on that stern height alone
Would e'er have fixed her mountain throne.
Yet, never did the traveller stray,
Benighted on his homeward way,
O'er the steep mountain's chilly height,
  But still he found a shelter there,
Where he might pass the gloomy night,
  Secure of rest and homely fare,
While the recluse from each strange eye
Concealed herself in mystery.

To her the young Cashmeerians came,
Drawn thither by that stranger's fame—
For many a wild yet wondrous tale
Was of her told through Cashmeer's Vale;
And her sweet voice possessed a power
To lure them to her lonely cell,
E'en at stern Midnight's dreary hour;
For then 'twas deemed, by potent spell,
She would e'en Fate's dark secrets tell.

And would they some dire foe disarm,
They sought of her some secret charm,
Which e'en would in a firmer chain
Bind a lost lover's heart again.

Each maiden, ere the bridal hour,
Claimed at her cell a charmed flower,
Or sainted amulet, to bind
In Love's fond links the wandering mind.

How powerful is the Mind's deep sway
O'er lowly nature her wild lay
And mystic strains, to them still brought
All that their simple wishes sought;
She thus their youthful bosoms chained,
While in her mountain cave she reigned,
Which looked o'er Cashmeer's lovely vales,
  Its bright cascades, its gushing fountains,
Its gardens, fanned by purest gales,
  By zephyrs breathed from those high mountains.
And 'midst those cloud-capt hills of snow,
Young Spring now shone with varied glow,
Making that Valley like a gem
Placed in an Eastern diadem.
A thousand streams of glittering waters
  Glide through enamelled plains of flowers,
Yet lovelier far its lovely daughters,
  Concealed in those enchanting bowers;
And there was one whose jet-black eye,
  Pure as the chrystal murmuring stream,

Unconscious of Love's witchery,
  And tender as his first fond dream.
Her sire, upon the Valley's side,
  Had placed her lone zenana there,
Resolved in that retreat to hide
  This lovely bud—his pride, his care;
And rear unseen young Aza's charms,
Far from the din of hostile arms.—

Beyond Himlaya's proud ascent,
  Where Ganga winds his sacred way,
O'er many a tower and battlement
  The Rajah held a sovereign sway:
And though a mighty line had shed
  O'er his high race their deeds of fire,
And his own name by Fame was spread,
  And stern and ruthless was his ire;
Yet, for that dear and lovely one
He seemed to live and breathe alone.

In the young maid he oft would trace
His own lost maniac's pensive face—
She who had sunk beneath the tide,
In the full power of beauty's pride;
Though years had fled, from his seared heart
Her cherished image ne'er could part—
Still was he plunged in hopeless gloom,
Save when he gazed on Aza's bloom.

Yet, well he loved his princely heir,
Now in Ambition's wild career,
An only son, his first fond boast,
The early pride of one long lost;
But he has left the Valley's pride,
Nor longer roams by Aza's side:
For never was an Eden seen
That could with Cashmeer's Vale compare,
Amidst whose groves, for ever green,
How often had he wandered there!

When the maid's voice could soothe his soul,
Which scarce had borne his sire's control;
And never did her youthful eye
Beam with such gladness as when Fame
Brought to her ear some victory
Joined with her own Zelindah's name,
Which, as a meteor seen afar,
Seemed her own loved and guiding star—
Yet thoughts of absence caused a sigh,
A shade of sadness in her eye—
And when her sire her tears would chide,
Telling her she should be the bride
Of some young warrior, "Never, never,"
The maid would cry, "these heart-strings sever!—
For who would love me half so well
As my dear sire? Ah! sure no other
My every care and fear dispel,
Unless it were my own loved brother!"

Thus, in these fair and happy bowers,
She scarcely felt the flight of hours;
And oft at eve would idly stray
  On the green margin of the lake,
Watching the mild decline of day,
  When echoes on her ear would break,
And on the passing zephyr swell,
So sweet and wild the sad notes fell,
That she still deemed some spirit there
Lurked in the wave, or hung in air—
Yet never, save by her alone,
Was heard that sad, mysterious tone;
It seemed the voice of years gone by,
The lovely hours of infancy;
And sounded like a well-known strain
She feared she ne'er should hear again,
Of her whose wild lute's magic thrill
Had lured her senses at her will.

But long those cherished hours were fled
The Moslem had in vengeance led
The desolating sword and fire
Against the province of her sire;
Yet, ere the foe had poured his rage,
  Trampling on shrines and temples fair,
He sent the darling of his age
  To seek a safe retreat—e'en where
His summer bower was sheltered, far
From the fierce withering breath of war,
And in that lovely valley still
Secured her from each threatened ill;—
Yet she had ne'er that minstrel seen,
Since she in Cashmere's Vale had been,
Whose distant image oft would gleam
O'er her sad thoughts, as 'twere a dream.
Again she hears the mournful strain
Float on the breeze—then pause again;
So wildly sweet the measure stole,
It moved to tears her inmost soul.

The sun was set, she lingered still,
Her gaze was fixed on that high hill
Beneath whose shade her summer bower
Hung like a wild neglected flower ;
For there the maid had ceased to stray,
Since that too well remembered day
Her brave Zelindah left again
Those towers, to head his warrior train.
It seemed as though her own soft lute,
So long forsaken, so long mute,
Were murmuring a melodious lay,
To hymn the sweet decline of day ;
That some pure spirit of the sky,
Had breathed the wondrous melody ;
And though eve's latest beams were fled,
Her youthful bosom felt no dread,
Resolved the secret spell to trace
Which ever dwelt round that wild place.—
With eager haste the bower she sought,
So long forsaken, when she thought

She heard the thrilling notes once more :
Her trembling hand is on the door,
It wakes a chord to memory dear,
Perchance the spirit wanders near
Of her, whom time nor absence ever
Could from her youthful bosom sever !

SONG.

Oh ! seek ye my lone cell, 'tis on the steep mountain,
Where the fierce eagle soars—ah ! there is my pillow ;
My food the wild berry, my drink the cool fountain,
And my sad dreams are lulled by the loud dashing billow.

I heed not the peal of the cloud-rending thunder,
Nor winter's dread storm as it howls round my dwelling ;

Though the lightnings flash cleave the tall oak asunder,
To me 'tis more calm than my bosom's fierce swelling.

For what to the bosom, borne down with deep sorrow,
Is the elements crash, or the storms wildest rage?
Where not one ray of hope can e'er gild a bright morrow,
Nor aught can the heart's bitter anguish assuage.

The maiden shrieked, and cried—" 'Tis she,
The vision of my infancy !"
She rushed within the bower, and fell
At that mysterious stranger's feet,
Before whose form, remembered well,
Her heart almost forgot to beat :
Though years had fled, that vivid eye
Had not yet lost its brilliancy ;

Nor age her lofty form had bent,
Though time a silvery tint now lent
To blanch her locks, concealed beneath
Her flowing veil, and mountain wreath.

She raised young Aza to her breast,
And there with mad'ning fervor prest;
"Think not," she cried, "though since we met,
Long years have flown, I could forget
The only links, which from thy birth
Could bind me to this hated earth.
For thee I've borne the heaviest doom,
Wandered in misery and gloom:
The rocks my pillow, and my head
Sheltered in some forsaken shed.
You gaze on this wild care-crazed form,
Ah! it has borne the heaviest storm,
That e'er the tyrant hand of power
Could on unhappy woman shower.

Yet I was once like thee—as fair,
As young in hope as free from care;
And there was one I dare not name,
As proud of heart as high in fame,
As e'en Zelindah: do not start!
Think'st thou I have not read thy heart?
Yes, I have wandered near thy bowers,
Watched round thy most unguarded hours;
And when the hero still was nigh,
Have I not marked thy bosom's sigh;
And seen the mantling bloom which fled,
When the brave youth to war had sped.
  Oh! had I known that love a crime,
I then had whispered in thine ear,
  Beware of love, beware in time!
For still thy guardian friend was near.
That youth, who with thee still has roved,
Whom thou from earliest childhood loved,
He does not own a brother's name,
But soon a dearer tie may claim;

By thy pure cheek's bright crimsoned glow,
I see the secret thou wouldest know :—
Well then, the mad'ning tale once more,
Of years gone by, of hours long fled ;
Of days this bosom will deplore,
'Till every pulse of life be dead :
How oft at Cama's shrine I knelt,
How pure the gifts I offered there,
The barbed shafts how deep I felt,
I need not at this hour declare.
Have they not ting'd my lingering years
With haggard grief, with frantic tears ?
Too fleeting were the hours I spent,
Amidst my youth's first fond content ;
When to my heart a bud or flower,
Could spread a charm, a magic power,
Around my paths, for they were given,
By one who formed my young heart's heaven.
I loved, and was beloved again,
But iron-fate soon broke the chain:

I dreamed not that a father's will,
Would all my fondest visions chill,
Or that ambition's stern decree
Could link the chains of misery.
Fair was the morning of my life,
  'Till the sad hour a father sent,
A wretched and a loathing wife,
  His once-loved child, to banishment!
My doom was fixed from that sad hour,
Though high the rank, and proud the dower.
Sent by the prince henceforth to be
The ruler of my destiny.
In vain with flowers they wreathed my head,
  Decked me with gems against my will,
In me, alas! e'en hope was dead,
  And memory's stings would rankle still.
To me the infant buds of spring,
No source of joy, or hope could bring;
And the fresh dewy flower which spread
Around my path and fragrance shed,

Which once had filled my soul with gladness,
Served but to add a deeper sadness;
But when the orb of day was gone,
And sunk into the western deep,
Then in deep solitude, alone,
I dared my wretched fate to weep.
I envied e'en the peasants' lot,
Her humble fare and rustic cot,
Where pure affection might entwine
A sympathetic heart with mine.

"Though round my nuptial couch a train,
Of humble slaves did still attend;
Yet midst that group I sought in vain,
I could not hope to find a friend.
For they had thought my splendid lot,
Bright and unclouded; and forgot
How oft each fair and glittering wreath
Conceals a broken heart beneath.

Yet, there was one young slave who well
The sorrows of my heart could tell—
With mine her fate, from childhood blended,
She on my hours of hope attended,
And knew that never could my eye,
Beam, save with cheerless misery—
'Tis past, those bitter days of sorrow,
Yet there ensued a sadder morrow.
Months passed unheeded, save by tears,
Dark and immutable the storm
Which hovered o'er my future years,
And blighted soon my youthful form.
I fondly hoped no sterner blow
Could fall on my devoted head;
That sorrow's wounds were sure, though slow,
And soon would shrine me with the dead,
Where memory could not shed a beam,
To wake the agonizing dream
Of hopes long fled;—that on that pyre
My woes and wrongs would all expire.

'Tis not the wretch that misery claims,
Or broken heart, on whom death aims
The unerring shaft, the proud, the brave,
Nought can the destined victims save,
For I, whom withering grief had chained,
For deeper sorrows still remained;
While the high Lord to whom my sire
My fate had bound, I saw expire.
Soon his remains the Brahmins bore,
In triumph to the Ganga's shore;
There raised the high funereal pile,
With perfumed woods the flame they fed,
Where I had hoped with joy to smile,
And lay me by the unconscious dead,
To still the auguish of despair!
A self-devoted suttee there.

"It might not be, for still another
Grief must be mine! to be a mother—

Perhaps that e'en the helpless child,
Ere on its face my fond eyes smiled,
Might fall a victim to its fate,
Leaving me yet more desolate.
The peasant child is happier far,
Born safe beneath an humbler star,
Than those of that illustrious dome
For which I left my first fond home.
Whose haughty chiefs with pride could trace
Their high descent from Surya's race ;
Thinking their lineage too divine
With those of baser rank to join.—
Thus was each hapless, helpless, daughter,
  Soon as the vital air she drew,
Still doomed alike to instant slaughter ;
  Lest the high stem from which she grew
Should view her, or ignobly wed,
Or that no nuptial torch should shed
Its genial influence o'er her head.

'Twas madness, that the only tie
By which I clung to earth must die.
Each deity with fervent prayer,
I knelt to, in my soul's despair ;
Had sought dread Seevah's holy shrine,
With solemn fasts, and gifts divine.
The youthful slave, who knew my fears,
Moved by my deep heart-rending tears,
Soothed my wild brain with vows to save
The infant from a cruel grave :
She thought the deity could ne'er
Propitious prove to man's despair ;
Or that so dread a sacrifice
Would e'er be grateful in his eyes.
A milder faith her heart had learned,
A brighter heaven her hopes discerned ;
Where prostrate woman's soul might dare,
With earth's proud lords an Eden share !

Thus Zeneib, in my lonely hall,
  Had by her manners gently kind,
Sought my lost reason to recall,
  And tranquillize my frenzied mind;
She hid the hour from every eye
  Which gave a daughter to my sight,
And saved me from the tyranny
  Of bigot pride, by instant flight;
For in those towers no pitying eye
Save her's had sought my tears to dry.

"My dower, the gems which nuptial pride
Had decked a hapless, wretched bride,
Of vast and countless wealth, alone
Were all I dared to call my own—
And these must henceforth be the store
To shield me on a happier shore.
The form once decked with Eastern pride
I now in humblest weeds must hide,

And like the bird whose fluttering wing
  The wintry tempest scarce has known,
Must bare me to its sharpest sting,
  And brave its darkest, deadliest frown.

"The faithful Zeneib by my side,
My slave no more—my friend and guide,
I soon resolved each storm to brave
That I my lovely child might save:
Sad fugitives! some den must shield
  Its wretched inmates from their foes;
And the wild desert's self must yield
  A refuge from far deeper woes—
For the hyena had I then
  Thought kinder, and a guest more mild,
Or the fierce tiger from his den,
  Than those who would have slain my child!

"'Twas in the hour of stilly night
That we began our venturous flight;

When every form save ours reposed,
When every eye save ours was closed.
With noiseless steps we bent our way
  Through the zenana's silent gloom,
While Sleep held there his poppied sway,
  Still as the inmates of the tomb;
Scarcely was heard the midnight air,
As if the hand of Death were there:
All round was hushed save our light tread,
Vibrating on the heart with dread.
For in each tree and shrub, with awe,
Some lurking foe our fears still saw—
Not then, as now—this care-worn form
Has since been hardened by the storm.
  Yet, once beyond the stately door,
I seemed to breathe a purer air;
  For in my arms I safely bore
My helpless babe, my only care.
Heedless of danger, death, or toil,
For her I sought the desert soil!

How sad and wild I will not say,
I felt the long and weary way;
Or when the tangled woods we dared,
How oft our steps the coiled snake scared;
Where nought beside its gilded brood,
Haunted that lonely solitude.
We had not thought that man had there,
  In plenitude of pomp and sway,
Unsullied by the hand of care,
  Revelled the thoughtless hours away.
Or in those vales, now pathless found,
The war-horse once had pawed the ground;
Where hung the dew-drops on the stems,
Had sparkled there far brighter gems.
And where the thorn now flung her spray,
Where the proud column prostrate lay,
The splendour of the eye had glanced,
And slender, graceful feet once danced;
That in that waste, so wild and still,
The Syren's voice with magic thrill,
Had calmed the tyrant to her will!

The ruin'd palace there had left,
  All that was sad and desolate;
Of all its grandeur now bereft,
  And crushed by the stern hand of Fate,
Where were its thousand slaves to tell,
How its proud towers in ruins fell?—
Yet did it seem an Eden blest,
For there I found a place of rest!

"From the poor peasants, Zeneib gained
The humble food our lives sustained;
And soon my heart began to know,
How much we to the lowly owe.
That those who once had been my scorn,
As strong of arm and heart are born,
As the proud lord who thinks that he
Is nearer to the Deity.

"By Zeneib's care we found a guide,
Who might her anxious charge divide;

Though strange in garb, and mountain bred,
Yet skilled in the rude life he led:
Each rugged pass and jungle wild,
To him familiar when a child,
Were traced with ease; and when at night
The tigers filled our hearts with fright,
He kindled fires our foes to scare,
And watched our short repose with care!
For love had in the desert drear
Conquered the rugged mountaineer,
Who had not 'scaped the witchery
Of Zeneib's dark and sparkling eye.
Oh! gentle love, that has the power,
E'en of the desert wild, a bower
To form, and a soft couch to spread
Beneath a rude and roofless shed!

"I see," the stranger cried, "thine eye
Beams with thy bosom's sympathy,

And had my sorrows ended here
I then had spared that sorrowing tear;
But still a weary task remained,
Ere an abode of peace was gained.
We now had reached the Ganga's side;
How might we cross the river's tide,
Whose wide and rapid torrent lay,
To check us in our toilsome way?
Here had I sunk in sad despair,
Worn out with misery and care,
Had not my infant's feeble cry
Roused more than woman's energy;
For near that hoped-for shore a dome
Was sheltered once, my fairy home,
And never was the wanderer's prayer
Or hope of refuge blighted there.

"But quickly had the peasant's skill
Taught us the tide to stem at will;

Rude skins he sought, and these were bound
(Well filled with air) our forms around,
Whose buoyant force might bear us o'er
The dark blue stream, to gain the shore.

"'Twas the same wave whose dashing spray
So oft had formed my youthful play,
With Hindoo maids, at Eve's sweet hour,
Our prize the lotus' rosy flower.
Yet, why recall joys fled for ever,
  Except in Memory's soothing charm?
Hope that is dead, ah! never, never,
  Can it Despair's cold bosom warm!
My faithful Zeneib hid her fears,
Checking the warm, unbidden tears,
To see me, like the lowliest slave,
Condemned to tempt the treacherous wave.

" In a broad vase our guide had made
A couch, in which my babe was laid.
While steering the light bark, an isle
Allured him there to rest awhile;
Which up the stream, with verdure driven,
Had from its parent shore been riven,
And formed a bower so bright and fair,
That the young syrens of the deep,
'Midst clustering buds, might nestle there,
Beneath the noontide sun to sleep:
Yet, woe to those who tempt the guile
Of the sea nymphs' bewitching smile!
For scarce the guide his charge had laid
Under the cocoa's feathery shade,
When from its root a serpent darted,
So lately from the green shore parted—
Who can describe a mother's awe,
When I the venomed reptile saw
With coiled folds insidious glide
Where slept my babe?—the affrighted guide

Let go his hold—I saw no more—
  My every pulse of life seemed dead—
They bore me to the distant shore,
  Like one whose last, long sigh had fled!"

The stranger paused: her sad eye fell
  On Aza's cheek, so deadly pale,
Like one who hears the passing knell
  Of all most dear borne on the gale.
She seized the lute, whose dulcet thrill
Might the maid's trembling bosom still;
As died in melting strains the lay
The glittering tear-drops passed away.—

SONG.

I.

Ah! there floated a Spirit the dark waves beneath,
Who guarded the couch where my cherub reclined;
She had come from her spar-grot to seek a fair wreath
Of bright lotus' buds, her fair tresses to bind.

II.

A trophy of flowers her soft hand divided,
Whose roseate tints with the white spray were blended;
And as down the clear stream it triumphantly glided,
She around the frail bark their sweet buds suspended.

III.

Even he, the young god of the flower-bound quiver,
Had he seen thus usurped his own rosy throne,
So lovely the couch, as 'twas borne down the river,
On his light rainbow wings to its rescue had flown.

The lay was o'er, the minstrel gone,
And the young maiden left alone!
She gazed upon the soft-toned lute—
Her heart was cold—it's strains were mute.
Who was that sad, mysterious one,
Whose every glance, whose every tone,
Sunk on her soul? Ah! what the tie
That seemed to link their destiny?
Where she had heard the harrowing tale
Which changed her bloom to deadliest pale,

She still sat there in anxious thought,
When her young slaves her presence sought,
For what could now her footsteps stay
Beyond the soft decline of day?
Why did she veil her dark black eye,
Or why was heard her bosom's sigh?
She, who was lightest of the throng,
First in the dance, the tale, the song?
The stranger had unveiled her eyes,
And other hopes and other ties
Pressed wildly on her trembling soul—
She could not the quick throb control;
And ne'er had Aza sought till now
In deep seclusion to conceal
Her conscious eye—her cheek's deep glow
She dared not to herself reveal.
Then silently she sought the bower
Where she unheard, unseen might weep—
For ne'er till then had aught the power
From her soft couch to banish sleep.

CONCLUSION.

'Twas eve; and sweetly o'er the Vale,
The lovely garden of Cashmeer,
The moon was shining bright and pale,
Reflected in its waters clear.
A thousand pure cascades were flowing,
And many a stream like diamonds glowing;
Across the lake the light bark shot,
To seek some loved and favoured spot,
Where lingered the expectant maid,
And for her tardy lover staid;
For well the youthful heart can tell
How pure and holy is the spell
Shed by the ray of the moonlight beam
On the bud, or the flower, or mountain stream;

And never summer shone more bright
Than on that pure and lovely night—
Nor yet more fragrant breathed the gales,
Borne by the zephyrs o'er the vales—
Nor did the pale moon ever throw
On the still lake a softer glow—
Yet all unconscious of the scene
Strayed Aza on its margin green;
She now must from her bosom tear
One who too long had lingered there.
Oh! why did that sad stranger tell,
Her young heart, like a withering spell—
"He on whose arm thou oft hast leant,
Beneath whose gaze thy dark eyes bent,
Does not a brother's fondness claim,
But yet may own a dearer name?"

Ah! had she never known that he,
Her first, her fond idolatry,

No longer by that sacred tie
Was linked to her own destiny,
She ne'er had felt the deathlike chill
Creep through her veins, her bosom thrill
With hope destroyed, when the sad knell
On her young heart like lightning fell—
And 'twas her sire who aimed the blow
To shade her future years with woe.
And must she be the hapless bride
  Of one whom she has never known?—
From all she loves on earth divide,
  Where her first cherished hopes had grown?
Dearer to her fond bosom ever
Will be those scenes, which never—never
Can be effaced from her sad heart,
Till life, and love, and memory part.
As easy to forbid the sea
  Its wild, impetuous waves to fling,
As to blot out from Memory
  Its tender first imagining.

How dared she to her sire confess—
The child his wishes still would bless,
She whom he clasped to his fond bosom,
All drooping like a broken blossom,
Though bright its tints when morn begun,
May fade before the setting sun.

Yet she had fondly hoped that he,
Companion of her infancy,
Ere the all-dreaded hour should come,
Might reach once more his parent home.
And e'en the minstrel's thrilling lute
To her expectant ear is mute;
Did she not say, her watchful eye
In weal or woe should still be nigh?
Yet now she seems by all forsaken,
Like the seared bough the wind has shaken;
And never did her bosom deem
Till now, her hopes were all a dream.

Under Himlaya's beetling brow
  A wild recluse was said to dwell,
And there young Aza seeks to know,
  E'en at that steep and awful cell,
How might those ills averted be
Which now hung o'er her destiny;
For often had she heard the tale,
How the young peasants of the Vale
Would climb the steep and rugged height,
To hear her plaintive notes at night;
And never was her deep cave sought,
But thence some wondrous spell was brought,
Of mountain buds, whose magic power,
Plucked at the silent midnight hour,
If twined around the brows at night,
Would give such visions of delight,
That the bright spell-wrought charm would be
A dream of fond reality!

Young Aza has won the mystic wreath
With perfumes charged by the zephyr's breath,
And on her sleepless couch has laid,
The vivid hues of the midnight braid—
And she has dreamed by its lovely spell
The visions her fancy loves so well.

Now the dhauk's loud notes are heard around,
And on the distant echoes sound;
The feast is spread, and the guests invited,
But the maiden's fondest hopes are blighted—
She who now in her bower should be,
Amidst the toilet's mystery,
The finger's tapering ends to dye,
A deeper tint to lend her eye,
To deck with gems her glossy hair,
And the light nuptial veil prepare—
'Tis needless; for young Aza's eye
Is deeper than the raven's dye,

Nor can its lash of ebon hue
The lustre of that eye subdue;
Like clustering dates on palm-trees glowing,
Her tresses o'er her form are flowing—
Nor gem, nor flower, those tresses braiding,
But a light veil her tall form shading.

Slaves are now through the garden seen—
They seek their lovely Bridal Queen:
They wait her in the nuptial bower—
Her sire prepares the maiden's dower.

She now is in the splendid hall—
On vacancy her glances fall;
The bridegroom there awaits his bride,
And he is by young Aza's side,
Has whispered softly in her ear—
"Aza! thine own Zelindah's near!"

Who can the wild emotions tell
  Which glided through her trembling frame?—
Her dark eye on the loved youth fell
  When her ear caught the treasured name.

And near her sire the minstrel now
Stands with a brighter, happier brow—
For in that mourner's altered form,
Crushed by the weight of Fate's fierce storm,
In her now care-worn, faded face
The Rajah doth a sister trace—
Nor longer desolate and wild
  In mystery she wanders there—
She now has claimed her wave-borne child,
  Sheltered beneath a brother's care.
And once more to her trembling breast
Her own pure, lovely blossom's prest!

Nor has that sire a daughter lost—
She still is his fond pride and boast;

For is she not Zelindah's bride ?
And when she wanders by his side,
He still will bind her laughing brow
With buds which on the mountain grow !

THE HAREM.

'Tis night once more, and from their bowers
  The Harem's youthful inmates come,
Nor veil their charms—but like night's flowers,
  Shed a still brighter, lovelier bloom.

For while the sun shone on the stream,
  And flowers all bent and fading lay,
Making their salaäms to the beam
  Of the eternal God of Day.
Each one within her latticed bower
Had slept away the sultry hour.
Now, like the floweret when the dew
Revives its drooping faded hue,

Yet fairer seems each youthful brow,
Each cheek reflects a brighter glow.
And all around is soon in motion,
Light as the silvery spray of ocean.
While through each marble pillar'd hall
Mirth hails once more night's festival.
Yet neither can the perfumed spray,
Of the cool murmuring fountains' play,
Nor the light dance their steps invite
To linger there that lovely night.

But, fleet as the young wild gazelle
  Flies bounding o'er the flowery heath,
They seek the kiosk's lonely spell,
  Where ocean billows glide beneath.
And there once more the tale, the song,
Must cheer the night's still hours along
'Till the bright clustering Pleiads lave
Their lustre in the foamy wave.

The moon once more upon the sea,
Glows with her wonted majesty;
And with her mild, yet brilliant light,
Hails the approach of pensive night:
For when her beams o'er hill and plain
  Shine through an Eastern summer sky,
Who would e'er sigh for day again,
  When night can yield such witchery?
And, where the mountain's shadow flings
  O'er sea and shore its lovely gloom,
And the light zephyrs on their wings
  Come laden with the gul's perfume,
While vivid fancy lends the rein
To link the soft enchanting chain,
Till all the distant landscape seems
Bright as e'er shone in Poet's dreams.

The young Cashmerian, whose wild lay
Last eve had lured night's hours away,
'Till the dawn's star proclaimed the day,

The silence broke :—" Look there," she cried,
" On the high mountain's shadowy side,
Amidst the gloom one well might deem
Some giant strides the mountain stream;
See his tall form and turbaned brow
Wreathed with the wild crag's drifted snow."

" And his plume's shadow in the wave,"
Gulzara said—an Afghan slave.
" Perchance e'en now in those wild dells
The Fairies weave their flowery spells,
Dancing beneath the moon's pale ray,
'Till chased by the first star of day;
And all our wandering shauger's tell,
  That midst our wilds and deserts rude
The Spirits of the Waste still dwell,
  Hid in each dreary solitude.—
And ever in the coming storm,
Is seen a fierce gigantic form;

And if at midnight's gloomy hour
  A hapless wanderer falls beneath
That wild Goule's dread malignant power,
  On the lone dreary trackless heath,
He never shall behold the ray
Of morn illume his homeward way,
And as to-night my lute's rude strain
Must still your wandering fancies chain,
'Till the first paly star of dawn
Shall to our cells our footsteps warn;
The lay I choose, 'though strange and wild,
I oft have heard when yet a child."—
Her fingers sweep the trembling notes
'Till on the breeze their echo floats.

THE CAVE OF GULISTAN.

THE CAVE OF GULISTAN.

THE TALE OF THE AFGHAN SLAVE.

The night was dark, loud thunders roared,
  Across a wild and trackless plain;
The mountain streams in torrents poured,
  As though they ne'er would rest again:
Nought could the horrid gloom dispel,
Save where the vivid lightning fell,
On a lone warrior and his steed,
Urging its flight with breathless speed.
And well might he its swiftness try,
To reach some sheltering sanctuary;

For the dread flash, one moment seemed
A living sheet of fire; then gleamed
From helm to falchion, by his side,
Quelling with fear his horse's pride.

Though dauntless that young Knight might be,
The terrors of that hour of gloom
Had wakened dreams of fantasy,
Of the lone tenants of the tomb,
Who on that blasted heath might stray,
To lure the traveller on his way.
And oft where glared the lightning's flash,
Amidst the howling of the storm,
And the deep thunder's echoing crash,
His fancy saw some hideous form;
Nor could the firmness of his soul,
That wild delusive fear control;
For of that trackless waste was told,
How the dark Spirit of the wold,

Would lure the hapless wretch who fell,
Beneath its dread malignant spell;
Through pathless wilds and ravines dire,
To swamps where lurked the treacherous fire,
Whose quivering, false, delusive beam,
There vanished, like a fleeting dream,
Or vice with evanescent joys,
Tempting the victim it destroys.

The Knight all shuddering felt his steed
Had slackened in his wonted speed;
And though he urged both tightened rein
And barbed spur, 'twas all in vain:
"What now, my gallant Barb," he cried,
"Wouldst thou forsake me in my need?
Where now has fled thy wonted pride,
Or is thy hapless fate decreed?"
Then quickly vaulting from his seat,
His steed sank lifeless at his feet.

" Ho! my brave Barb, and must I now
Thy swiftness and thy aid forego;
To leave thee in this desart place,
The noblest of thy vaunted race,
Thus lone, ingloriously to die,
Beneath this wild inclement sky;
Had I but in the warlike fray,
  Have seen thee yield thy gallant breath,
Not thus, the ravening vulture's prey,
  On this inhospitable heath—
Perchance thy lord himself must bow,
To the same shaft that lays thee low!"

He stifled in his breast the sigh,
And brushed the tear-drop from his eye:
Turning him from the piteous sight,
To tempt the horrors of the night;
He wrapped his war-cloak round his form,
Nor heeded the wild pelting storm;

Which like a wearied infant's cry,
Seemed hushed with its own lullaby,
Yet with its murmuring sobs would still
Reverberate o'er plain and hill.

The scene is changed—and now again
  Her crescent light the moon displays;
And many a star is in her train,
  Lending their mild and gentle rays;
That the brave chief almost might deem,
The past a false and feverish dream,
Did not his dripping war-plumes tell
How wild and fierce the torrent fell;
And his poor steed who lifeless lay,
All powerless on the drifted way.
For on the breeze, a distant strain
Is borne amidst the wind's low plain,
And soon within his breast once more,
Fond Hope resumes her soothing power.

Onward he speeds, resolved to see
Whence came that thrilling minstrelsy,
For well he knew no mortal tongue
The wild melodious measure sung.

'Twas said that in that desart drear
There lay a deep and wondrous cave,
Impervious to the slaves of fear,
But ever open to the brave;
And oft the Shauger's tale had told
Of woods, and lawns, and towers of gold,
And richest harmonies, whose swell
Upon the listening wanderer fell;
And the wild legend said, that there
Was hidden a sword of wondrous power,
Beneath a fierce enchanter's care,
Till at stern midnight's solemn hour,
Some warrior knight, both pure and brave,
Should seek the windings of the cave;

That if with firm victorious hand,
He won the all-subduing brand,
Then by its power his foemen still
Must yield obedience to his will.

For this the Knight had left his home,
Through these long dreary wastes to roam:
And never chief of Afghan race
Had soul more firm—his manly face
With toil embrowned bespoke how well
His nervous arm a foe could quell;
And never to a purer breast
Was sainted amulet e'er prest.

O'er the unbroken, slippery sod
Onward his weary footsteps trod;
Stained was his war-cloak with the soil,
His strength almost o'ercome with toil,
When his dark eye with rapture fell
Where, in a deep and lonely dell,

A distant light its radiance shed
On a low murmuring streamlet's bed;
And never weary pilgrim found
The long-sought shrine on sainted ground
With joy more pure than that which now
Dispelled the gloom from Selim's brow,
For such a stream was said to lave
The margin of that mystic cave,
And such the meteor-light which threw
O'er the cool stream its silvery hue!

Still guided by the flickering beam
He followed close beside the stream,
Which from the mountain's lofty height
Onward had urged its rapid flight,
To where the echoing bubbles died
Beneath the rugged mountain's side.

There he the long-sought cavern found,
Whose deep and fearful entrance wound

Through the firm rock, where never day
Lent to its gloom one genial ray.

Selim was brave, and yet a thrill
Of horror gave a deadly chill
To his firm heart, till once again
He heard that soft and lovely strain—
It was the same enchanting lay
That lured him on his cheerless way,
And, like the echoes of a lute,
  Had floated on the wind's low sigh,
Till e'en the angry storm was mute,
  Hushed by its plaintive melody;
And now in accents sweet and clear
It fell upon his wondering ear.—

SONG OF THE SPIRITS OF THE CAVE.

I.

Now speed ye, Sir Knight, for none save the brave
E'er pierced the deep windings of Gulistan's cave;
And few are the bold, favoured mortals for whom
We dispel the deep horrors that lurk in its gloom.—
Then onward with courage, for thou hast a charm
That hangs on thy bosom, each spell to disarm!

II.

Then onward, Sir Knight, and pursue the pure stream,
While its wave yet reflects the pale meteor's beam,

Nor slacken thy speed, for, if once in gloom
Its ray should be quenched, oh! beware of thy
doom!—
Then onward with courage, for thou hast a charm
Which hangs on thy bosom, each spell to disarm!

III.

And there glides a pure streamlet through Gulistan's bowers,
Soft murmuring o'er vallies enamelled with flowers,
Where the Syrens are waiting, thy steps to invite
To their bright coral caves—but, beware them, Sir Knight!—
Then onward with courage, for thou hast a charm
That hangs on thy bosom each spell to disarm!

IV.

And beware ye of trusting their blue eyes' soft
wile,
Or the soul-witching pleasure that beams in their
smile;
Nor heed the sweet murmur which thrills in their
lay—
Those accents of sweetness are meant to betray!—
Then onward with courage, for thou hast a charm
That hangs on thy bosom, each spell to disarm!

The strain has ceased—and now a ray
Of light illumes his onward way;
Yet still beneath his plaited vest
The talisman he firmly prest,
For on it was engraved a spell
Whose import few on earth could tell,

By whose mysterious, forceful aid
He now must win the warrior blade.

With hopes renewed, and toil forgot,
He threads the windings of the grot;
Led by the guardian light along,
Or cheered once more by the Syren's song.
Beneath the high-arched roofs where hung
  In many a wreath fair glittering spars,
Which all around their splendour flung,
  Like heaven's bright canopy of stars.
Through many a winding path he sped
Regardless where those windings led,
Till from the rock a rushing stream
  Of dark blue eddying waters flowed,
On whose wild foam the dazzling beam
  With fast-increasing splendour glowed;
And there upon the foamy spray
Was moored a bark, with flowerets gay

Wreathed round its helm, while floating there
  Were seen the Spirits of the Stream;
Nor ever had there aught more fair
  Shone on a raptured poet's dream—
For rosy health and beauty shone
Bright as the gems that decked each zone;
Their floating hair was by a braid
  Of wild sea-weeds and pearls confined,
'Midst which the wanton zephyrs played,
  While round their snowy arms were twined
The clustering coral's ruby hue—
Nor water-lilies were more blue
Than were those languid eyes that fell
On his charmed vision like a spell;—
Theirs was the soft and lovely lay
That first had lured him on his way;
And as their lutes' soft chords they swept,
  A thousand echoes there awoke,
Which long in those lone caves had slept,
  For nought their slumbering dreams e'er broke,

Save when a favoured mortal sought
The windings of that wondrous grot.

Soon in their bark the weary Knight
  Is wafted o'er the sparkling tide;
Reflecting back each sparry light
  That hung upon the cavern's side—
While still the maidens sang the lay:

—

"On, on, Sir Knight!—away! away!—
Soon you will reach the bowers of light,
Fairer than ever met thy sight;
For what has aught the world to shew
Like those that in our vallies glow?
Yet let not Beauty's glancing eyes
  Allure thee tow'rds their fairy bowers—
Nor heed the Syrens' witcheries
  To twine thee in their bonds of flowers;

For thou wouldst find them hard to break,
  Firmer than adamantine chain.—
Then up, Sir Knight!—awake! awake!
  Wouldst thou the conquering sword obtain—
And with the hidden magic blade
Win fair Gullee, thy dark-eyed maid!"

Selim aroused him from his dream,
For the low murmuring of the stream
As the light current glided by,
  Amidst a silence so profound,
With their soft, plaintive melody,
  Like infancy his senses bound;
Yet from his bosom rushed the glow
That quickly tinged his manly brow,
When on his ear in music fell
The name of her he loved so well—
For whom he left his princely home,
Through danger's wildest paths to roam.

What though that maiden's eye revealed
The truth her faltering tongue concealed—
Still danger threatened to divide
The warrior from his blooming bride;
For 'twas her royal sire's decree,
Each noble champion should be free
By arms to win this blooming flower,
And bear her from her virgin bower:
And many a rival chieftain strove
To gain the youthful Gullee's love:
Yet Selim's turtle-dove was prest
To her young heart, a welcome guest,
And fondly nestled on her breast:
And when she in his helm had seen
Her favoured hue, the forest green,
Twined with the snowy myrtle flowers
Which ever bloom in young Love's bowers,
Did not her conscious veiled eye
Receive his homage with a sigh?

Now hid beneath her sire's high dome,
  She pants for freedom, like the child
Restrained within its parent home
  From wandering through the flowery wild,
Or trackless heath, to follow still
The wayward fancies of its will.

On Selim's ear that one loved name
Was life and hope, a spur to fame;
It woke his every pulse to fly,
And urged him on to victory.
And now once more he to his breast
His sainted amulet has pressed—
Feels hope renewed, for still the lay
Was, "On, Sir Knight!—away! away!
Then on!—for ere the dawn has shed
  Her liquid fragrance o'er the plain,
Or night before her steps has fled,
  Thou must bestride thy steed again."

They now the illumined cavern left,
And issuing from a low arched cleft,
Bright was the scene that met his eyes;
  The pure white streamlet sparkling there,
'Midst vallies of a thousand dyes,
  And turrets lost in dewy air.
And the light bark has won the shore—
His lovely guides' soft lay is o'er,
With "On, Sir Knight! our task is done,
Be true, and then the sword is won!"

Now Selim stands all lonely there,
While scarce a zephyr fans the air;
The silent night-breeze steals along,
Wafting the bulbul's plaintive song;
To his loved rose, whose balmy breath,
Perfumes the air from many a wreath;
For night her dewy mantle still
Flings o'er the grove, the vale, the hill;

And still the moon with chastened beams,
On tower, on shrub, and streamlet gleams.
No time has Selim's eye to roam
On scene so fair, to that bright dome
Where lies the magic blade, he now
Must hasten ere the moon's pale glow
Has sunk behind the mountain's brow.

So witching was the scene, that well
He might have thought it some wild spell—
One of those lovely legends told,
Of turrets and of domes of gold:
For such were those which rose in view,
  Towering amidst fair diamond streams,
Reflecting rays of every hue,
  Lit by the moon's pale flickering beams.
While groups of maidens dance around,
To the lute's soft enchanting sound;
Whose wild and thrilling echoes die
On the light zephyr's passing sigh.

Heedless of all, brave Selim trod,
With hasty steps the flowery sod;
And now to meet him on his way,
A young and graceful wood-nymph flies,
With blushing cheek, and laughing eyes;
She greets him with a gentle lay:
"Oh! stay with me," the syren sung,
"Oh, stay, Sir Knight!" her soft lay rung:—

THE SYREN'S SONG.

COME! fly with me to my fairy cell,
And with summer flowers I'll bind your brows;
And shew you where the sea-spirits dwell,
And where the roseate coral glows;
All hidden beneath the ocean's waves,
In amber grots, and coral caves.

And there you a fairer bride will find,
Than the dark-eyed maid you left behind,
For how can the daughters of earth compare,
With the matchless forms of the sea and
air!

Then come with me to the wild sea shore,
I 'll bring you to where the ruby glows,
And where lies hidden the golden ore,
O'er which the murmuring streamlet flows;
Then fly with me to our bowers of light,
Where the cheek is more fair, and the eye more
bright.

And there you a fairer bride will find
Than the dark-eyed maid you left behind,
For how can the daughters of earth compare,
With the matchless forms of the sea and
air!

And well has that young warrior need
Of her soft blandishments to heed;
For who might 'scape the witching spell,
Where that blue eye's soft lustre fell!
And Selim had not borne its ray,
  Such was that young enchantress' power;
His heart had owned her forceful sway,
  And followed to her fairy bower,
Had not a love as pure and true
As ever mortal bosom knew,
Shielded him from her dimpled smiles,
And saved him from her syren wiles.—
In vain she twines him round with flowers,
Of every hue, from her fairy bowers.
He feels the danger of delay;
With one wild struggle bursts away,
Breaking the flowery wreaths that round
His form that blue-eyed girl had wound.

And quickly rushing o'er the plain,
Nought can his eager haste restrain.
But like an arrow in its flight,
He soon has gained the tower of light.
And as the Knight the portal won,
Hoping his weary task was done,
O'er that bright lovely scene was spread,
  A hovering, deep, portentous gloom,
While with loud shrieks the Syrens fled;
  As if Fate's universal doom
Had met them in their festive hour,
And crushed them with his ruthless power.
Pausing he stood, though dauntless, still
His bosom felt a secret chill;
For as the vivid lightnings gleamed
Amidst the darkness, still there seemed
To lurk dread forms within the way
Through which his further footsteps lay,
And from each avenue around,
With wild and threatening gestures frowned.

Yet onward still his way he gained,
Through halls where gloom and silence reigned;
Till one more spacious met his sight,
And guarded by an armed knight.
Dark were the sable plumes which threw
O'er his fierce brow their ebon hue.
And his high towering form well told,
Of pondrous limbs of giant mould;
And woe befall the luckless wight,
Who quails beneath that warrior's might.
For that dark brow and flushing eye,
Tell not of deeds of clemency.

Yet Selim's heart has nought to fear—
No blue-eyed Syrens meet his eye;
No soul subduing minstrels near,
To tempt him by their witchery.
For 'tis not danger's rugged ways,
Nor warrior's frown, the heart betrays,

Like the soft glance of woman's eye,
Or the low murmur of her sigh,
And he has every spell withstood,
And every lurking snare subdued;
For as the withering gloom of night,
Is quickly chased by morning's light,
So did the issuing beam which fell
Upon his path each doubt dispel.
For more than mid-day splendour there,
  The proud magnificence displayed;
The fretted roofs, and portals fair,
  With gold and precious gems inlaid.
While on a glittering altar shone,
The blade which he must call his own,
Before the morning's earliest ray
Shall warn him on his homeward way.
The thought has nerved his youthful arm,
Boldly to brave each magic charm;
And rushing fiercely on the knight,
He dared him to the coming fight.

The giant's frown defiance threw,
As from its sheath his falchion flew;
He aimed it at the watchful Knight,
  To crush him with its pondrous weight:
Fierce as the simoom's withering blight,
  Had fallen the sudden stroke of fate,
Had not within his mailed hand
Been clenched his firm and faithful brand.

On whose well-tempered shining blade,
Was not the Koran's verse displayed?
No sooner its charmed radiance fell
  On the proud warrior, than like one,
Struck by some dark malignant spell,
  His sinewy arm seemed turned to stone!
And his fierce eye and threatening brow,
No longer frowned upon his foe.

Brave Selim to the altar flew,
From whose bright shrine the prize he drew;

But as he grasped the glittering blade,
The whole bright vision seemed to fade,
And night around his footsteps flung
Her ebon mantle, still there rung
Upon his ear the welcome lay:
"On, on Sir Knight! away, away!
On; on, thy weary task is done:
Away! the magic sword is won!"

When at the dawn the morn's faint grey,
  Was mingled with the sun's first beam,
On that wild plain the warrior lay,
  Till roused from a long weary dream;
And near him stands his own true steed,
Accoutred for the warrior's need,
  Not tired and weak, o'ercome with toil,
As midst the storm on that lone heath,
  At night he sank upon the soil
With sunken eye and gasping breath:

But snorting loudly at the side
Of his loved lord, with native pride.
Was it a dream, so clear and bright,
The vision of that wondrous night,
That on his waking fancy still
  Seemed echoing to his listening ear,
The soft lay, with its dulcet thrill,
  On that lone waste so wild and drear?—

No, still within his mailed hand
He firmly grasps the conquering brand,
Which soon shall quell his rival's pride,
And win Gullee, his blooming bride!

THE HAREM.

The crescent-moon has veiled her light,
And ocean's waves no longer bright;
The sea-bird flaps his dusky wings,
  Portentous of the coming storm;
The mountain's lofty shadow flings
  On the blue sea its giant form.

'Tis night; the sun's last beams are set
  On the high beetling sea-girt towers,
The Harem's inmates all are met,
  With tales to pass the night's soft hours.

Gulzara, the young Afghan slave,
While her eye rested on the wave—
" Look! dear Chiera, look!" she cried,
" Afar off, o'er the dark-blue sea,
Where the light bark still stems the tide,
And rides the waves in liberty,
At night's still hour the fisher seeks
The finny tribe—the active Greeks
Still steer their skiffs, and ere the day
May safely anchor in the bay—
But, dear Chiera, why that sigh,
And the bright tear-drop in thine eye?—
Have I awoke a chord whose thrill
Has slept within thy bosom still?—
But take thy lyre, and let its strain
Soothe thy torn heart to peace again."

The meek girl bowed—it was indeed
A chord that made her young heart bleed.

When her eye marked the mountain's brow,
  And thought of all its flowery pride,
Of the clear, murmuring streamlet's flow,
  The clustering village at its side,
Where her light, fairy footsteps ranged
Ere war her childhood's hopes had changed,
And brought her from her lowly home
To Stambol's high imperial dome.
She thought of Greece, and Greece's wrongs,
And all that to that land belongs:
While Fancy, in the hovering gloom,
Now sees again her hapless doom—
Her lover—parents—kindred slain—
While she must wear the captive's chain,
And never—never hope to see
Her own loved native mountains free—
Then could her trembling voice be mute?
She now has seized her pensive lute,
And as its chords her light hand sweeps,
Within her young heart sorrow sleeps.

THE HETÆRIA.

THE HETÆRIA.

THE TALE OF THE GREEK SLAVE.

THE moon had reached her zenith height,
Shedding a mild and silvery light
O'er marble dome and temple fair,
  On olive groves and vineyards green:
Who that had haply wandered there,
  And gazed on that enchanting scene,
Fair Athens! had not sighed that thou
Shouldst to a foreign despot bow?

If still so lovely in thy chains,
So peerless in thy fall'n remains;
What wert thou when thy conquering name
Was borne upon the wings of Fame!

'Twas at that hour when nought around
  Could break the solemn stillness, save
The night bird's low and plaintive sound,
  And murmuring of the Ilissus' wave,
As o'er its pebbly bed it flings
Its pure wave in its wanderings.
E'en at that lonely hour, alone,
O'er broken earth and rugged stone,
A care-worn matron bent her way,
To where a temple's ruins lay.
So wild and haggard was her form,
It seemed as if Time's direst storm
Had swept across her pallid brows,
And blanched her locks like Alpine snows,

Yet had not quenched her glancing eye,
Which told of brighter hours gone by.

One who at such an hour had sought
  Those sacred haunts, in that fair clime,
And seen that spectral form; had thought
  A sybil of the olden time,
Had left her long and silent sleep,
O'er her lost country's wrecks to weep—
The splendour of three thousand years
Sunk in the gulph of time:—if tears,
Could have recalled the hour when free,
The sun of Greece shone gloriously!
But no;—she like her country now
Must to the Moslem despots bow:
Yet had a spirit bold and free,
Taught her to scorn her destiny.
How could her aching bosom turn
To Greece's wrongs, nor inly burn,

To hurl revenge on Moslem foes,
From whom had sprung her country's woes.
Though she had passed long anxious years
Of mental gloom and withering tears,
Yet might she live its sons to see
Break their foul bonds—again be free;
She had not felt the galling chain,
Nor borne the tyrant's rage in vain.

Born on the mountain's rugged soil,
  Unshackled to a tyrant's will,
The steepest heights were climbed for spoil,
  The eagle's nest—midst winter's chill,
Or summer's heat;—unnurtured, wild,
Had grown this hardy mountain child.
And with each circling year which flew,
Her love of freedom stronger grew:
Yet as life's varying hours of joy,
  With those of grief are mingled ever,

So time will each bright flower destroy,
  And nature's fondest bonds still sever.

Nought now remained of all the past,
Save fierce revenge—the first, the last
Fond cherished vision of her breast!
  Which haunted still her nightly dreams,
Drove from her couch the balm of rest,
  And tinged life's latest fleeting beams.
So often was her aged form,
Seen midst the howlings of the storm,
With fearless foot-steps wandering where
None e'er had trod, save fierce Despair;—
Who, reckless if the beetling height
Should plunge his steps in endless night;—
That weak credulity still thought
She there some dread communion sought.
Yet on her wild prophetic tongue,
The mind enslaved with rapture hung,

'Till the fierce glancing of her eye,
Was deemed the power of witchery:
And to that form which age had bent,
And withered like a desart flower,
Or blighted oak, their fears soon lent
O'er the fierce elements a power:
Deeming the glances of that eye,
Could scan e'en dread Futurity.

'Twas said that when the storm rode high,
She on the sea-girt shore would roam;
While thunders echoed through the sky,
Skimming the ocean's billowy foam:
Or with loud incantations urge,
The sinking bark beneath the surge!
And woe befall the fisher's skiff,
Who saw her on the beetling cliff
Wave her red scarf—he never more
Will safely reach the hoped-for shore.

And still at midnight's solemn hour,
  She oft was by the wanderer seen,
When every noxious weed hath power,
  Plucking the night-shade's deadly green;
Which culled beneath the dews of night,
Filled with the mildew's cankering blight,
Would form a spell, so deep and dread,
That from their silent sleep, the dead
Were summoned at her mighty call,
To share the impious festival!

For this her wanderings ever led,
Near to the pure Ilissus' bed,
Where lay concealed a rocky cave,
Washed by its slow and murmuring wave;
There, midst the vigils of the night,
  Were heard strange voices—like the yell,
Of hopeless spirits in their flight,
  Which ever on the lone ear fell.

Such was at least the peasant's tale,
Who crossed her in that wizard vale :
And ever to that fatal night,
He traced his cattle's early blight;
Or if his children fell beneath
The marshes' pestilential breath,
'Twas by her ban the vapour fell,
Made noxious by her potent spell!

But most the Moslem shunned her path,
Like a fierce messenger of wrath :
As if the power of that wild eye,
Could seal his wayward destiny.
Ah, no—'twas there far other themes,
Than those which roused their idle dreams,
Which from her lonely home still led
The matron towards the Ilissus' bed—
For in that dark and secret cave,
Where held the meetings of the brave!

Sons of a race, whom e'en the chain
  Of Turkish thraldom could not quell:
Whose souls, still unsubdued, remain
Beneath oppression's withering spell.
And her's was not the only tongue
From whom the Moslem's scourge had wrung
Determined vengeance on the foe—
A deadly judgment, sure though slow.
For round a massy unhewn stone,
Where many a votive falchion shone,
Stood a few chosen spirits, still
Unbroken to their despot's will.
And midst those few devoted brave,
Wrapped in the semblance of a slave,
Was one, whose gentler form might well
From each dark brow the frown dispel.
But no, that youthful warrior maid,
Grasps in her hand the deadly blade,
And with them joins in Freedom's song,
Which the wild echoes bear along—

SONG.

Arise, ye sons of Greece!—arise!
  Shake off the slumbers of the grave;
Lift thy proud banners to the skies;
  Descendants of the mighty brave!

Answer, ye sons of heroes!—tell,
  Are all your laurels withered, gone,
Since the proud Grecian phalanx fell,
  Conquering on glorious Marathon?

Oh, Greece! resume thy native dower!—
  Wipe out the deep, corroding stain!—
Nor longer to thy tyrants cower;
  But break—oh, break the galling chain!

Wave ye your ancient banners, then ;
  Awake ye from your vile repose !
Destroy the poppied wreath !—Be men !
  Once more with laurels bind your brows !

Arise ! arise !—once more be free,
  Oh, land still bathed by Thetis' waves !—
From Athos' mount to Io's sea,
  Break—break your chains !—no more be slaves !

Why should thy temples crumbling lie,
  Nurse of the gods !—oh ! glorious land !
Beneath its banners conquering die,
  Or else be yours its proud command !

Weep not, ye land of heroes ! now
  No longer shall your echoes tell
Ye crouch to tyrant despots !—Lo !
  Arise, and break the withering spell !

And thou, fair harbinger of light!
  Shalt see our conquering banners fly;
Bright Venus! chase the gloom of night,
  And lead us on to victory!

The song is o'er; yet every eye
  Rests on that slender, youthful maid,
Who swears to conquer, or to die,
  Ere she will sheath the vengeful blade;
Yet twenty summers had not spent
  Their fervour on her youthful brow,
Ere every early tie was rent—
  Each gentler hope was withered now.

Fair Constance—who had seen that face
  Beaming with smiles, in childhood's bower,
Thou daughter of a mighty race!
  And seen thee in thy tyrant's power,—

Had they not wept that one so bright
Was doomed to share her country's blight!
And well that country's wrongs she knew—
  Felt how corroding were its chains—
Then to its rescue nobly flew,
  To wipe away its hateful stains!
And she has bled for that dear land,
  And every sterner peril dared;
Wielded alike the warlike brand,
  The battle's fiercest tumult shared!
And yet that slender, fragile form,
  More like a weak, exotic flower,
Unused to bear the wintry storm,
  Seems fitter for a gentler bower.

And now no more with Grecian maids
  The dance she joins, at day's soft close,
Nor her long glossy ringlets braids
  With chaplets of the summer's rose.

No more the panygiri wakes
  Her slumbers with the echoing lute;
But sounds of war her rough couch shakes,
  And every softer strain is mute.

Now in that lonely, secret cave
She meets a few devoted brave:
And with that aged matron tells,
  Deeds which their glorious sires had done;
They need invoke no other spells,
  Than those around that altar stone,
To make their maddening pulses beat,
To take revenge—revenge how sweet
To the seared heart; for none were there,
Who had not borne thy stings—despair!

And now they swear a deadly vow—
While yet there breathes one Moslem foe,

Or that one Greek still bears the chain,
Never to sheath the sword again!
That all shall hail their country free,
Or share a new Thermopylæ!

THE HAREM.

THE strain has ceased, the lay is o'er,
  For night and storm have wrapped in gloom
The mountain's brow, the distant shore,
  Dark as the mournful minstrel's doom.
The sea girt tower has lost its spell ;
Each maid within her latticed cell,
In slumbers light, and fairy dreams,
Lies hid till morning's early beams ;
Dreams yet unstained with early sorrows,
Visions which youth from hope still borrows !

* * *

The night has fled, and morn again
  Seems fairer for the storms of night;
For tempests, threatening clouds, and rain,
  Make sunshine ever seem more bright.
And yet it has not chased the dew,
  Which glittering hangs on each light stem,
Like Eastern gems of every hue,
  To form the dawn's bright diadem.
And ere the sun has on the streams
And flowers dispensed his fervid beams,
The Harem's lovely maidens glide
Amidst the garden's flowery pride;
For in that blooming solitude
No wandering stranger dares intrude;
Yet neither flowers nor perfumed gale
Can keep them from the promised tale.
And ere the sun's refulgent power
Shall shed his rays on hill and tower,
They seek a wild sequestered bower,

Where a cool murmuring fountain plays
O'er jasmine wreaths and woodbine sprays.
All lovely was the bower they chose;
Close trellised round, the Syrian rose
Through the rich gilded fretwork hung,
And all around its fragrance flung,
Through the cool Kiosk's tender gloom,
Lending each cheek a richer bloom.

But where does the young minstrel stay,
Dark Zinda, whose wild native lay
Should charm noon's sultry hours away?
"Hark! the sitara's chords are sounding,
I hear her fairy footsteps bounding
O'er the light turf," young Leilah cried—
The Indian girl is at her side;
And quickly at Mehdalia's feet
The minstrel takes her lowly seat.

THE INDIAN MAID.

THE INDIAN MAID.

The summer's sun was fast descending,
And hastening to his western bed;
While Eve her azure tints was blending
With his last beams of gold and red.
The musk-rose lent its sweet perfume
To scent the gale, at that still hour;
And many a bud with varied bloom,
Unveiled its charms to grove and bower.
The feathered tribe with rapture flew
To taste the bright bespangled dew,
And sing the soft decline of day
With warbling notes from spray to spray.

So lovely was the scene—so fair,
That e'en the fairy race might there
Have crouched beneath the cowslip's bells,
To weave their elfin frolic spells.
And Nature seemed all sweetly mute,
  Save the soft melody of song,
Like the wild echoes of a lute,
  By the light zephyr borne along;
'Till near an oak by lightning blighted,
  Once the proud monarch of the wood,
A stranger from his steed alighted,
  And near that scathed ruin stood.

He seemed a warrior worn with toil,
Stained with the desart's sandy soil,
Who in that flowery Eden blest
Had hoped to find a place of rest:
For who had thought in that fair scene
The voice of sorrow e'er had been,

Or that the tyrant in his power
Could make e'en drear that lovely bower.

For scarce the wanderer sat him down,
To hail the breeze from mountain blown,
E'er on that breeze there came a strain,
  Drear as a distant funeral knell:
A sad—sad moan, 'twas woman's plain,
  And wild that plaintive measure fell.

SONG.

Ah! land of the sun! how bright and how fair
Are thy groves and thy vallies! ah! why is it there
That the spirit of tyranny still should reign,
And shed o'er thy flowery bosom the stain
Of crime and revenge, and its deadliest train?

That e'en where the Deity's hand has spread,
With prodigal love, both his fruits and flowers;
Where the lofty palmyra lifts its proud head,
And the amrita's buds still adorn its fair bowers;
And where nought should resound save the spirit of gladness,
E'en there should be heard the deep echo of sadness.

Ah, heard ye the wail, the wild voice of despair!
How the maidens are weeping and tearing their hair,
As they draw near the fountain with accents of sorrow,
For Hadana's rose must be wed on the morrow!

Dark and fierce is the chief who the fair maid is wooing,
And he comes not in kindness, like a fond lover suing;

'Tis her Sire's wide land, which he claims as her
dower,
And o'er Hadana waves his proud standard of
power.

Sad and drear was their wail, and loud was their
cry,
While Hadana's rose sat alone in her bower:
She was weeping her fate that no hero was nigh,
To combat her cause with the strong arm of
power.

Ah, where was the warrior who ought to have
wielded
His falchion, to conquer her father's fierce foe—
The betrothed of her young heart, whose arm should
have shielded
The rose of the valley from sorrow and woe?

Then each filled her vase with the pure liquid stream,
As she sang the wild lay with low accents of sorrow;
And cast her last glance at the sun's parting beam,
For Hadana's rose must be wed on the morrow!

The stranger started from his dream,
With the last echo of their strain;
He marked the sun's departing beam,
As slowly rose the mourning train.
"Stop!" cried the chief, with glance of fire,
"Where is the hapless maiden's sire?
Has age unnerved the warrior's arm
That his fierce foe can work his harm?
But if the hand of withering time,
Has bound him to the usurper's power,
The avenger from another clime,
Shall shield from blight his lovely flower!"

Then from that mournful group stood one,
With downcast eye and trembling tone;
Around her form she drew her veil,
And thus began her sorrowing tale:—

SONG.

PROUD and bold were the warriors in Hadana's towers,
And loudly its bards sang the deeds of their fame;
Its maidens were lovely and safe in their bowers,
While unconquered its walls, and unsullied its name!

Till there came on the whirlwind the siroe's fierce rage,
And o'er its chief showered its withering blight,

That the spirit of madness has seized on his age,
And left in its fury the mind's darkest night.

Now the bright star of Hadana sheds lustre no more,
For sunk is its glory, and quenched its bright beam;
And nought now remains but its fate to deplore,
While on memory alone shall survive the fond theme!

She paused, then turned her to depart,
Nor longer the sad measure flows,
Which told of many an aching heart,
A sire's decay, a daughter's woes.

But ere the young and mournful train
Had homeward bent their steps again;

When from his dream the stranger woke,
  And on them turned his flashing eye;
Whose glance a wild emotion spoke,
  Then raised it to the darkening sky.
"Great Bramah! hear"—He bent his knee,
"To-morrow's sun shall see her free;
Or in one bright and circling flame,
Ends Alia's woes—her lover's fame."

Quick as the radiant beams of light,
Can clear the noxious mists of night;
So hope can lend a beam to chase
The gloom of woe from beauty's face:
And that sad group soon felt the glow,
Of joy light up each youthful brow.
And they have borne the soothing spell,
The name of one long loved so well;
Have whispered in the mourner's ear,
  That he, that loved one, even he

From her so long estranged was near,
  Had sworn to set his Alia free;
To save her from the bridal hour,
And shield her from the usurper's power!

'Tis morn, the sun his golden beams
Has shed on towers, on vale, on streams;
Yet still on Hadana's turrets fly,
The rebel standard vauntingly;
Sad Alia sits within her bower,
All trembling at the coming hour,
And though her whispering hopes still tell
Of him, who sent the midnight spell,
Chasing the gloom that dimmed her brow,
And lending to her heart a glow;
For well that loved and cherished name,
On her fond ear like music came:
Life's treasured vision, love's bright theme,
Her morning hope, her midnight dream;

Yet in the coming fray may fall
Her every hope—her love—her all,
And o'er her life be shed a gloom,
More withering than the silent tomb.

The feast is spread in Hadana's hall,
Now shines the nuptial festival,
While Caroo-gully's tyrant lord
In triumph heads the festive board;
Yet now no more that hall along
Resounds the all-enlivening song,
For never may the bard's wild lays
Be heard in an usurper's praise;
While every guest with darker brows
Deems all around are secret foes.

But where is Alia, the young bride,
Who now should triumph at the side
Of the fierce chief?—she lonely still
Feels round her heart the sickening chill

Of hope delayed—like the frail flower,
Withering beneath the mid-day's power.

In vain they deck the trembling maid,
And her long glossy ringlets braid;
Those waving tresses, whose deep dye,
Is rivalled by her darker eye;
And round them twine the fragrant wreath
Of the bright Champac's golden flower,
Her bright and flowing veil beneath,
To fit her for the bridal hour.
While o'er her slender form they throw
A rich vest of the saffron's glow;
Yet in the foldings of that vest,
A dagger to her heart is prest:
For sooner will the tiger lay,
With the young lamb in frolic play,
E'er she in bridal bonds may twine
With Caroo-gully's recreant line.

Around the stately hall now stand
The conquered vassals of the land,
Who on fierce Caroo-gully wait,
To grace his triumph; yet stern hate
And proud defiance lurk beneath
Each splendid vest and flowery wreath.

And now the portal opens wide,
To hail his lovely, trembling bride!
But 'tis not a young timid maid,
E'en of blood's crimson tint afraid;
For other guests are they that now
Through Hadana's stately portals flow:
'Tis armed warriors that rush in,
While the ghong's loud and threatening din
Whose wild sounds like an angry flood,
Or mountain torrent in its fall,
Summon its vassals on to blood,
With echoes through the vaulted hall;

And blades and glittering spears illume
Each shadowed depth, each pillar'd gloom.

Well may the shrinking revellers quail,
Beneath those bands in armed mail;
For Caroo-gully's chieftain now
Encounters with a deadlier foe;
And he a fiercer war must wage,
Than woman's tears or blighted age.
For midst those warriors one proud form
  Still seeks him in the deadly fray,
Braving the conflict's fiercest storm,
  Stands forward in the bold array.
Like one who fights for fame—for life,
His blade is keenest in the strife;
And Caroo-gully's chieftain now,
Must to the conquering warrior bow.

The day is won! the doubtful fray,
Like a wild meteor passed away.
And now in Hadana's spacious hall
Is spread the bridal festival;
The bard the heroic tale resumes,
And beauty's eye the feast illumes.
And o'er young Alia's lute again
Her fingers wake a well known strain;
While one is there whose rais'd eyes tell
How true his bosom feels the spell—
An aged chieftain, on whose brow,
Sorrow and time have shed their snow;
But now no longer wayward, wild,
But meek and gentle as a child,
And reason on his lingering hours
Of life one ray of sunshine pours.
And Sanga triumphs at the side
Of Alia his young blooming bride!

NOTES

TO THE

TALES OF THE HAREM.

Note 1. Page 10.

Those which wreathed Camadeva's quiver,
Culled near her own pure sacred river.

Camadeva, or the God of Love, has a variety of epithets, all very significant of the unbounded sway which he possesses over the hearts of men; he is armed with a bow and five arrows, denoting the five senses, each of which weapon is baited with a different kind of poison.

Forster's Sketches on India.

Note 2, p. 11.

As oft, beneath the banian, dance
The fire-flies at the close of day.

The lampyris, or fire-fly. The nocturnal splendour of these insects, in the torrid zone, is not to be conceived;

they will illumine the dark side of a grove of banians, where thousands of them flit among their branches, with a brilliancy of which the faint light of our glow-worm can give but little idea:—they are like flying emeralds.

Forbes's Oriental Memoirs.

Note 3, p. 13.

The Arab sought those flowers like gems
From the mimosa's pendent stems.

The mimosa produces splendid flowers of a beautiful red colour, with which the Arabians crown their heads, on their festival days.

Niebuhr.

Note 4, p. 15.

With the champaca sweet,
To braid our dark hair.

The elegant appearance of the gold-coloured champaca in the dark hair of the Indian women, have supplied the Hindoo poets with many elegant allusions.

Sir William Jones.

Note 5, p. 20.

Perchance the sweet sitara's chords
Were struck by one who felt the pain.

The sitara, or guitar. The great variety of sounds produced from this instrument are all extremely soft and melo-

dious: in the hands of a skilful musician, it is said to be capable of tranquillizing the most boisterous disposition, to which purpose it has often been applied, as well as to soothe distress and affliction.

From Tolvin's Costumes of India.

Note 6, p. 21.

The banian's hospitable shade,
By re-productive branches made.

The banian tree, ficus Indica, the most beautiful of Nature's productions. A banian tree forms the most beautiful walks, vistas, and cool recesses that can be imagined; the fruit is a small fig, when ripe, of a bright scarlet, affording sustenance to squirrels, peacocks, and birds of various kinds, which dwell among its branches. The Hindoos are peculiarly fond of this tree, considering its long duration, its outstretching arms, and overshadowing beneficence, as emblems of the Deity, and almost pay it divine honour.

Forbes's Oriental Memoirs.

Note 7, p. 21.

'Twas on the eve the Hindoos lave,
Like sea-born Rhemba in the wave.

Rhemba, the sea-born goddess of Beauty, the Indian Venus. She was the mother of Camadeva, by Krishna. The Hindoo women, in her honour, bathe with particular ceremonies on certain days. Such ceremonies, piously

performed on the third of the light half of moon Jaish'ta, (which day is called Rhemba-tritiya), are peculiarly auspicious to female beauty. Rhemba bathed on that day.

Moor's Pantheon.

Note 8, p. 23.

Wrapped in her arms an infant bore
To bathe in Ganga's holy wave.

Poetical name for the Ganges.—The Hindoos worship the Ganges, and there is a peculiar sanctity annexed to its stream.

Ibid.

Note 9, p. 24.

It was as though, on that bright river,
Fair Maia's son in all his pride.

Maia, another name of the Indian Venus. Camadeva was, by the Indian bards, said to have been first seen floating down the Ganges on a lotus wreath.

Ibid.

Note 10, p. 25.

As when she on her lotus throne,
In dazzling majesty first shone.

She is thus described inhabiting the lotus, clothed in superlative beauty, in the first bloom of youth, covered with ornaments, and bearing every auspicious sign.

Ibid.

Note 11, p. 29.

When on its stream pale Chandra's light
First shone on Rhemba's festal night.

Chandra, the Indian name for the Moon.

Note 12, p. 35.

Nor to the soft sitara's notes
The bard recounts the tales of old.

Bart—Baut—Batt, is a curious approximation of the name of the western Bard; and their offices are nearly similar. No Hindoo Rajah is without his Bards.

Wilks's South of India.

Note 13, p. 36.

The almas' bounding steps no more,
Spring o'er the tesselated floor.

The almas, or dancing girls. Many of them are extremely beautiful and delicate in their persons, regular in their features, with a form of perfect symmetry; their dances require great attention, from the dancer's feet being hung with small bells, which act in concert with the music; two girls usually perform at the same time: their steps are not so mazy as ours, but much more interesting, as the song, the music, and the motions of the dance, express love, hope, jealousy, and despair.

Forbes's Oriental Memoirs.

Note 14, p. 37.

And now the yellow scarf was waving,
The rajpoots' brave and warlike cry.

Hindustanee Kuswar. A beautiful yellow dye is made from this colour. To use it on the day of battle is among the Hindoos deemed a sacred pledge to die or conquer. Volunteers are often invited to wear the yellow scarf, which implies desperation in any undertaking.

Sir John Malcolm's Central India.

Note 15, p. 49.

Beneath Himlaya's snow-clad brow,
Where the dark forests high tops frown.

Himlaya, or the Mansion of Snow, is the name given by the Hindoos to those vast chains of mountains, which limit India on the north. The hills are held sacred by the Hindoos, who suppose them to be the terrestrial haunt of the god Iswara.

Sir William Jones.

Note 16, p. 51.

For many a wild yet wondrous tale
Was of her told through Cashmere's vale.

Cashmeer, a valley surrounded by lofty mountains, their summits covered with perpetual snow, while their acclivities, according to their aspects, are either adorned with the trees of Europe, or decked with the perennial plants of Asia, and

sometimes presenting a delightful assemblage of both. Immense rocks, rich groves, and murmuring cascades, produce a sublime and beautiful effect. These waters, either in roaring cataracts or gentle streams, flow to the lakes or rivulets which fertilize the plain, and there uniting, form the celebrated Indus, one of the great rivers of India.

Forbes's Oriental Memoirs.

Note 17, p. 53.

Her sire upon the valley's side
Had placed her lone zenana there.

The apartments set apart by the Hindoos for the women.

Note 18, p. 54.

For never was an Eden seen,
That could with Cashmeer's vale compare.

This happy valley, this Paradise of Hindostan, is surrounded by mountains of vast height and rude aspect, covered with snow, or encased with glaciers, in which this enchanting jewel is firmly set. The roofs of the houses are planted with tulips, which in the spring produces a wonderful effect. Roses, and numberless flowers, ornament this happy clime; most of the Emperors of Hindostan have visited it, and forgot the cares of government during their residence in the Happy Valley.

Pennant's Western Hindostan.

Note 19, p. 67.

Soon his remains the Brahmins bore
In triumph to the Ganga's shore.

Most of the Hindoos burn their dead. The funeral piles of the rich are mingled with sandal-wood, and fed with aromatic oils.

Forbes's Oriental Memoirs.

Note 20, p. 67.

To still the anguish of despair
A self-devoted suttee there.

On the decease of the husband, if the widow resolves to attend him to the world of spirits, a funeral pile is erected, covered with an arbour of dry boughs, where the dead body is placed; the living victim follows, dressed in her bridal jewels, surrounded by her relations, priests, and musicians; she ascends the funeral pile, enters the awful bower, and placing herself near the body of her husband, with her own hand generally sets fire to the pile, which being constantly supplied with aromatic oils, the mortal remains are soon consumed.

Ibid.

Note 21, p. 68.

Whose haughty chiefs with pride could trace,
Their high descent from Surya's race.

Two of the ancient dynasties of Hindostan are called

Souraya Buns, or the Children of the Sun, the other, Chandra Buns, or the Children of the Moon.

Sketches in India.

Note 22, p. 68.

Thus was each hapless, helpless, daughter,
Soon as the vital air she drew,
Still doomed alike to instant slaughter.

Infanticide is not known among the lower classes; this shocking custom appears limited to some Rajpoot Chiefs of high rank, who from despair of obtaining a suitable marriage for their daughters, are led by an infatuated pride to become the destroyers of their own offspring. The petty Thakoor, or lord of Cherawul, married a daughter to the Rawal of Banswara thirty-four years ago; the pride of the Thakoor family was so excited by this, that it was resolved that no female should make an inferior match, and the despair of such good fortune again, has led to every female child being killed.

Sir John Malcolm's Central India.

Until lately the horrid, unnatural practice of infanticide in India, was supposed to have been confined to the tribes of Rajkuinar and Rajvansa, who inhabit districts in the neighbourhood of Benares; but our recent acquisition of territory and influence in the fine province of Guzerat, have disclosed the practice among several tribes in that extensive country; in Guzerat, female infanticide prevails among the tribes Jarejah, of which are the principal chieftains of the Peninsula.

Moor's Pantheon.

Note 23, p. 76.

But quickly had the peasant's skill,
Taught us the tide to stem at will.

If the Indians have to pass a river, both men and women, they fill the skin of a goat with wind and tie it round their waist, and by this means swim over; their children they put in an earthen pot, which they drive before them. A countryman and his wife, passing a river in the manner I am speaking of, had put their child, about two years old, into one of these pots; being about the middle of the river they found a little sand bank, on which there was a high tree, which the water had drawn away from the main land; the father drove the pot which contained the child on this place that he might rest a little: as he approached the foot of the tree, whose trunk was a little above the water, a monstrous serpent darted from its roots, and slided into the pot in which the child was; the father and mother frightened at the accident, and having lost their presence of mind, suffered the pot to be borne away by the river, and they themselves remained half dead at the foot of the tree. About two leagues down the river, a Banian and his wife and child washing themselves in the river, saw at a distance the earthen pot with the child's head out of the top, the Banian thinking himself in duty bound to assist the child, drew it toward the shore, the wife followed by her child came up to take the infant from the pot, and the serpent who had done no harm to the first child, twined itself round the other which was by its mother, and stang it, which caused its immediate death. Such an extraordinary adventure did not trouble the poor people, who thought it had happened by the peculiar will of the

Deity, who had taken away from them one child and given them another, and were immediately consoled.

Chardin.

Note 24, p. 77.

With Hindoo maids, at eve's sweet hour,
Our prize the lotus rosy flower.

The nymphœa nelumbo. The blue lotus grows in Cashmeer and Persia, but in Bengal we see only red and white; and hence, occasion is taken to feign that the lotus of Hindostan was dyed red with the blood of Siva.

Sir W. Jones.

Note 25, p. 88.

The dhauk's loud notes are heard around,
And on the distant echoes sound.

Dhauk, an instrument used at marriages and festivals.

Solvin.

Note 26, p. 88.

The finger's tapering ends to dye
A deeper tint to lend the eye.

When a girl is betrothed, her nails are died red with a preparation of the mendey, or henna shrub: they make a

black circle round their eyes with the powder of antimony, which adds much to their beauty.

Forbes's Oriental Memoirs.

Note 27, p. 96.

And all our wandering shaugers tell,
That midst our wilds and deserts rude.

Shauger; a sort of minstrel between the poet and the ballad singer.

Elphinstone's Caubul.

Note 28, p. 96.

The spirits of the waste still dwell,
Hid in each dreary solitude.

The Afghan's believe each of the numerous solitudes, in the mountains and desarts of their country, to be inhabited by a lonely demon, whom they call Ghoolee Beeabaun, (the Goule, or Spirit of the Waste); they represent him as a gigantic and frightful spectre, who devours any passengers whom chance may bring within his haunts. It is to this spirit they ascribe the illusions by which travellers are often led to believe they see sheets of waters in the midst of the desart, and they figure him watching near to seize the unhappy wanderer, who may be misled by his artifice, and tear him to pieces.

Elphinstone's Caubul.

Note 29, p. 106.

'Twas said that in that desert drear
There lay a deep and wondrous cave.

Near Candahar is a cave called the Cave of Jumsheed, to the end of which it is impossible to penetrate, on account of a torrent which obstructs its passage: but the Afghans relate, that after advancing a certain distance, one hears the roar of winds and gushing of waters, and that all progress is soon stopped by a wheel armed with swords, which is whirled round with such force and velocity, as to threaten to annihilate every thing which approaches it. Some bold adventurers, however, have overcome these obstacles, and reached a most enchanting garden in the bowels of the earth. They describe the verdure of this delicious region, its bowers, woods, and lawns, and its flowers of a thousand brilliant hues, as far surpassing any scene that the human imagination can figure—while the exquisite fruits, the perfumed breezes, and the ravishing music that for ever resounds, are equal to the warmest pictures of the Mahometan Paradise.

Elphinstone's Caubul.

Note 30, p. 111.

And there glides a pure streamlet through Gulistan's bowers,
Soft murmuring o'er vallies enamelled with flowers.

Gulistan, or Valley of Roses. The Persians give this name to all those places which they wish to describe as extraordinarily pleasant.

Ambassador's Travels.

Note 31, p. 127.

Fierce as the simoom's withering blight,
Had fallen the sudden stroke of Fate.

The effects of the simoom is instant suffocation to every living creature that happens to be within the sphere of its activity, and immediate putrefaction of the carcases of the dead. The Arabs discern its approach by the unusual redness of the air ; and they say, they feel a smell of sulphur as it passes. The only means by which any person can preserve himself from suffering from these noxious blasts is, by throwing himself down with his face on the earth.

Neibuhr.

Note 32, p. 137.

The Hetæria.

The word means "society." When the Hetæria was first formed, the women of Greece took an active part in gaining proselytes; nor was it unusual for ladies to be at the heads of Hetæria.

Blaquiere.

Note 33, p. 138.

Fair Athens had not sighed that thou
Should'st to a foreign despot bow.

The solitary grandeur of these marble ruins is, perhaps, more striking than the appearance presented by any other

object at Athens: the Turks themselves seem to regard them with an eye of respect and admiration.

Hobhouse.

Note 34, p. 143.

For this her wanderings ever led
Near to the pure Ilissus' bed;
Where lay concealed a rocky cave,
Washed by its slow and murmuring wave.

Following the channel of the Ilissus, about a furlong higher up, you reach the site of the marble stadium of Aticus Herodes. Not far from the top of the stadium, in the slope of a circular range of seats, is a cavern. On visiting this cavern, your recollections of past times would, for a time, give way to reflections caused by the sight of some present objects. The first day I visited the place, I observed a flat stone on the side of the rock, strewed with several bits of coloured rag, broken glass, and honey, and a handful or two of dried peas. As I was going to examine them, a Greek in company exclaimed, "Don't touch them, Affendi; they are the devil's goods—they are magical!" On inquiring, he assured me that some old women of Athens, well known to be witches, came to this cavern at the dead of night, and there performed their incantations, leaving these remnants as offerings to the evil spirit. Another person most seriously assured me, that this was not all; for that these same enchantresses had been often seen, during a midnight storm, skimming off the foam of the sea, where it rolls against the long pebbly beach, near the ancient port of Phalerus. These witches (a decrepid

creature was pointed out to me as one of them), are hated and feared by the Greeks and Turks; and make use of their supposed art to extort charity from the credulous and terrified females of both nations.

Hobhouse.

Note 35, p. 148.

Fair Constance—who had seen that face,
Beaming with smiles in childhood's bower,
Thou daughter of a mighty race,
And seen thee in thy tyrant's power.

Costanza Zacari, the heroine of Mistras. Zacari of Mistras, the father of Costanza, was one of the most formidable of those chiefs known under the name of Klepthai, with whom the Turkish tyrants of the Morea had ever to contend: his intrepidity and stratagem had, in fact, become proverbial; it enabled him to be, for many years, the terror of Cheli Bey and other Pachas. He was put to death by the Governor of the Morea.

Blaquiere's Second Visit to Greece.

Note 36, p. 164.

For Hadana's rose must be wed on the morrow.

During the period that the dominion of the Rajahs of Vijeyanuggur extended over the greatest portion of the south of India, two young men of the tribe of Yedava, named Vijeya and Krishna, departed from that court, in search of

a better establishment, to the south. Their travels carried them to the little fort of Hadana, a few miles from the present situation of the town of Mysore; and having alighted, as is usual, near the borders of a tank, they overheard some women, who had come for water, bewailing the fate of a young maiden of their tribe, who was about to be married to a person of inferior quality. The brothers inquired into the circumstances of the case; desired the women to be comforted, and offered their services in the defence of the damsel. She was the only daughter of the Wadeyar (or lord of thirty-three villages), who was afflicted with mental derangement; and in this desolate and unprotected state, the Chief of Caroo-gully, a person of mean caste, proposed to the family the alternative of immediate war, or the peaceable possession of Hadana, by his marriage with the daughter. The offers of the strangers were made known, and they were admitted to examine the means which the family possessed of averting the impending danger. In conformity with their advice, no change was made in the preparations for the marriage feast, and while the Chiefs of Caroo-gully were seated at the banquet in one apartment, and the men in another, the men of Hadana, who had been secreted for the purpose, headed by the two brothers, sprang forth upon their guests and slew them, then marched instantly to Caroo-gully, which they surprised, and returned in triumph to Hadana: the damsel full of gratitude became the willing bride of Vizeya.

Wilkes's South of India.

THE END.

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