

THE MOORISH PRINCE.

FROM THE GERMAN OF FERDINAND FREILIGRATH.

BY C. T. BROOKS.

His lengthening host through the palm-vale wound ;
The purple shawl on his locks he bound ;
He hung on his shoulders the lion skin,
Martially sounded the cymbal's din.

Like a sea of termites, that black, wild swarm
Swept, billowing onward : he flung his dark arm,
Encircled with gold, round his loved one's neck : —
“ For the feast of victory, maiden, deck !

“ Lo ! glittering pearls I've brought thee there,
To twine with thy dark and glossy hair,
And the corals, all snake-like, in Persia's green sea,
The dripping divers have fished for me.

“ See plumes of the ostrich, thy beauty to grace !
Let them nod, snowy white, o'er thy dusky face ;
Deck the tent, make ready the feast for me,
Fill the garlanded goblet of victory !”

And forth from his snowy and shimmering tent
The princely Moor in his armor went.
So looks the dark moon, when, eclipsed, through the gate
Of the silver-edged clouds she rides forth in her state.

A welcoming shout his proud host flings ;
And “ welcome ! ” the stamping steed's hoof rings ;
For him rolls faithful the negro's blood,
And Niger's old, mysterious flood.

"Now lead us to victory, lead us to fight!"
They battled from morning far into the night;
The hollow tooth of the elephant blew
A blast that pierced each foeman through.

How scatter the lions! The serpents fly
From the rattling tambour; the flags on high,
All hung with skulls, proclaim the dead,
And the yellow desert is dyed in red.

So rings in the palm-vale the desperate fight;—
But she is preparing the feast for the night;
She fills the goblets with rich palm-wines,
And the shafts of the tent-poles with flowers she twines.

With pearls, that Persia's green flood bare,
She winds her dark and curly hair;
Feathers are floating her brow to deck,
And gay shells gleam on her arms and neck.

She sits by the door of her lover's tent,
She lists the far war-horn till morning is spent;
The noon-day burns, the sun stings hot,
The garlands wither,— she heeds it not.

The sun goes down in the fading skies,
The night-dew trickles, the glow-worm flies,
And the crocodile looks from the tepid pool
As if he, too, would enjoy the cool.

The lion, he stirs him and roars for prey,
The elephant-tusks through the jungle make way,
Home to her lair the giraffe goes,
And flower-leaves shut, and eyelids close.

Her anxious heart beats fast and high:
When a bleeding, fugitive Moor, draws nigh:—
"Farewell to all hope now! The battle is lost!
Thy lover is captured,— he's borne to the coast,—

They sell him to white men,— he's carried—" O spare!
The maiden falls headlong; she clutches her hair;
All quivering she crushes the pearls in her hand,
She hides her hot cheek in the burning-hot sand.

PART II.

'Tis fair to-day; how sweeps the tempestuous throng
To circus and tilt ground, with shout and with song!
There's a blast of trumpets, the cymbal rings,
The deep drum rumbles, Bajazzo springs.

Come on! come on!— how swells the roar!
They fly as on wings, o'er the hard, flat floor;
The British sorrel, the Turk's black steed
From plumed beauty seek honor's meed.

And there, by the tilting-ground's curtained door,
Stands, silent and thoughtful, a curly-haired Moor.
The Turkish drum he beats full loud;
On the drum is hanging a lion-skin proud.

He sees not the knights and their graceful swing,
He sees not the steeds and their daring spring;
The Moor's dry eye, with its stiff, wild stare,
Sees nought but the shaggy lion-skin there.

He thinks of the far, far-distant Niger,
And how *he* once chased there the lion and tiger;
And how *he* once brandished his sword in the fight,
And came not back to his couch at night.

And he thinks of *her*, who, in other hours,
Decked her hair with his pearls and plucked him her flowers;
His eye grew moist,— with a scornful stroke
He smote the drum-head,— it rattled and broke.