

NOORMAHAL THE FAIR.[1]

("Entre deux rocs d'un noir d'ébène.")

[XXVII., November, 1828.]

Between two ebon rocks

Behold yon sombre den,

Where brambles bristle like the locks

Of wool between the horns of scapegoat banned by men!

Remote in ruddy fog

Still hear the tiger growl

At the lion and striped dog

That prowl with rusty throats to taunt and roar and howl;

Whilst other monsters fast

The hissing basilisk;

The hippopotamus so vast,

And the boa with waking appetite made brisk!

The orfrey showing tongue,

The fly in stinging mood,

The elephant that crushes strong

And elastic bamboos an the scorpion's brood;

And the men of the trees

With their families fierce,

Till there is not one scorching breeze

But brings here its venom--its horror to pierce--

Yet, rather there be lone,

'Mid all those horrors there,

Than hear the sickly honeyed tone

And see the swimming eyes of Noormahal the Fair!

[Footnote 1: Noormahal (Arabic) the light of the house; some of the Orientals deem fair hair and complexion a beauty.]