

DON RODRIGO.

A MOORISH BALLAD.

("Don Roderique est à la chasse.")

[XXX., May, 1828.]

Unto the chase Rodrigo's gone,  
With neither lance nor buckler;  
A baleful light his eyes outshone--  
To pity he's no truckler.

He follows not the royal stag,  
But, full of fiery hating,  
Beside the way one sees him lag,  
Impatient at the waiting.

He longs his nephew's blood to spill,  
Who 'scaped (the young Mudarra)  
That trap he made and laid to kill  
The seven sons of Lara.

Along the road--at last, no balk--  
A youth looms on a jennet;

He rises like a sparrow-hawk  
About to seize a linnet.

"What ho!" "Who calls?" "Art Christian knight,  
Or basely born and boorish,  
Or yet that thing I still more slight--  
The spawn of some dog Moorish?

"I seek the by-born spawn of one  
I e'er renounce as brother--  
Who chose to make his latest son  
Caress a Moor as mother.

"I've sought that cub in every hole,  
'Midland, and coast, and islet,  
For he's the thief who came and stole  
Our sheathless jewelled stilet."

"If you well know the poniard worn  
Without edge-dulling cover--  
Look on it now--here, plain, upborne!  
And further be no rover.

"Tis I--as sure as you're abhorred  
Rodrigo--cruel slayer,  
'Tis I am Vengeance, and your lord,

Who bids you crouch in prayer!

"I shall not grant the least delay--  
Use what you have, defending,  
I'll send you on that darksome way  
Your victims late were wending.

"And if I wore this, with its crest--  
Our seal with gems entwreathing--  
In open air--'twas in your breast  
To seek its fated sheathing!"