

2

Fast and far, where Guadalquiver, through earth's fairest garden, flows,
Where the snow white almond blossoms, and the golden orange glows.

3

Never once he slacks his bridle, never stays his fierce career,
Till, through woods dark-clustered round it, Alcolea's towers appear.

4

In the halls of Alcolea, twelve fair ladies lead the ball
With twelve knights of noblest lineage, and Almansor, chief of all.

5

Don Almansor—Donna Clara—never yet were prouder pair,
She, a queen, in stateliest beauty, with her crown of golden hair.

6

Paled and flashed her cross of opal as Almansor kneeling swore,
"By a Christian's faith" upon it, his true love for ever more.

7

Now in Alcolea's castle, festival and dance have ceased,—
All is dark and all is silent in the bower and in the feast.

8

But in Donna Clara's chamber, at her feet, Almansor lies,
By an evil dream o'ermastered, and she waits with mournful eyes.

9

Perfume, from a golden flasket, hath that gentle lady pressed
On Almansor's cold, pale forehead—but he starts in wild unrest.

10

Tenderly, with fondest kisses, she has touched the sleeper's brow,
But his lip is white and trembling, and his frown grows darker now.

11

Tears, that stream in bitter sorrow, for a true love lost and vain,
Weeps the lady on her lover—and he breaks that trance of pain.

12

For he dreamed—they stood together, Christian knight and lady fair,
In the cloister at Cordova, at the vesper hour of prayer.

13

And from cupola and column, where each giant shadow falls,
Sounds of ominous displeasure, seem to fill the ancient halls.