

DON ALMANSOR'S BAPTISM.

I.

At Cordova the cathedral hath a dome full fair to see,
Reared upon colossal columns three score and ten and three,

2

And on cupola and column many a text and legend old
From the Koran wreathes in arabesque of azure hues and gold.

3

On those walls of Christian worship still the Moorish blazons glow,
Wrought, by pious hands to Allah, many centuries ago.

4

Centuries old, yet freshly beautiful and uneffaced are they,
While, in time's unsparing torrent, kings and creeds are swept away.

5

In the cloister at Cordova, at the vesper hour of prayer,
Stands Almansor Ben Abdallah—in low voice he murmurs there,

6

As he looks unto the pillars and the giant dome on high,
To the walls with gold emblazoned and with lapis lazuli :—

7

Oh! ye strong and giant pillars, oh ye everlasting walls,
Reared, of old, to Allah's glory, now the Christian's servile thralls!

8

Where the muezzin called on Allah, in the olden faithful days,
Now the priests are chanting masses to the Christian Idol's praise.

9

Where the people praised the Prophet, in the good time long ago,
Bells are ringing, incense steaming,—all is puppet, pomp and show.

10

So unto the font, for baptism through the aisles, Almansor went
His head bowed in graceful reverence,—scornful smiling as he bent.

II.

Fast he rideth from the city—shrine and street are far behind;
And the foam is on his bridle, and his plume waves on the wind.