

THE MOIRA ENCANTADA.

[A belief of Spain. The wells of lonely Moorish ruins are haunted by the figure of a beautiful female, the Moira Encantada, or enchanted Moirress. Acquaintance with her brings misfortune and death.]

The Spanish night was breathless, still,
And in the shadow of the mill
No olive bent nor willow shook
Along the sullen meadow brook,
Nor any murmur met the ear
Save the rill tumbling o'er the weir,
When José his lorn loveplaint made
And softly sang this

SERENADE.

There lacks not music. Everywhere
The resting hills, the balmy air,
The æther blue, the stars, the moon,
In tune
Make silent melody, and sing
In chord with my love-zittern string.
Maraquita!

She answers not; her closed eyes
Make dark as when the daylight dies,
Why should her young life sleep so soon?
O boon

O'er her soft dreams love-watch to keep,—
Rest dear tired eyes in sweetest sleep,
Maraquita!

Be still, guitar. Caressing string
To her ear not to-night shall ring,
Enough for now the mill weir's croon.
Ere noon

Of night I shall be over streams,—
Good angels give thee loving dreams,
Maraquita!

A small hand drew the bars apart
And from the lattice shy was flung
A white rose with a crimson heart,
While red lips lisped in love's fond tongue
"Querido mi, I love thee?"
And answered low the voice that sung,
"Love's blessing be above thee!"

Young José took the homeward track
The while his heart with love-flame burned,
Ever and anon looking back,
Until he had an angle turned
That hid the water-dripping mill
With its low olive-circled grange,
Then set he stout to breast the hill
And make way to the higher range.

The higher up the more did change
The scene from meadows, lying lush,
To Moorland with its shades of browns,
Through which at intervals came rush
Of brook and rannel brawling down;
Yet higher, where lay mossy hags
Dotted with huge grey lichened stones
Down tumbled from the beetling crags
That stood out like an old world's bones,
Until he reached the trodden line
That ran along the ridge's spine.

As he strode up the road's incline
He heard in gusts come rough but clear
The home

SONG OF THE MULETEER.

Itch! trusty mulos! plod along the way,
Gee on! brindles! for mountain leagues are long,
Fair have ye footed, all the weary day,
Chime bells, mulos! and I will join my song,
For Paquita the goodwife
Sits up in the hut,
Little one's all in their cribs
With their tired eyes shut.

Not far, borricos! scarcely now a league,
Miles near the stable hardest are to draw,
Soon shall we cast our load and our fatigue
And you and I shall have our crisp rye straw,—
And Paquita the goodwife
Will bustle in the hut,
Little ones all in their cribs
And their dear eyes shut.

As o'er the selfsame landscape scene
The season's changing features pass
From springtime with its springing green
To summer with its wealth of grass,
And thence through autumn's ripened hues
Of nutty browns, till o'er the world
And vale and hill and running flues
Comes winter with its crystallised cold,
Yet still the visage is unchanged
Though over it have changes reigned;

So o'er this sunny land of Spain,
This languorous home of pride and sloth,
Are left faint traces of each reign
From the Iberi to the Goth,
And from the Goth, through divers creeds
And grades of glory, force and law,
Shining, ignoble, noble deeds
Did Christian and did Moslemah;
Hence faded faiths and present hopes
Are traced on these same mountain slopes.

It may be that in times of old
When Yousuf in Cordova reigned,
The gallant gay Morescoes bold
Their prancing Arab steeds restrained
Beneath wide spreading cork-oak aisles,
And bent their feathered turbans low
As through the forest's dim defiles
They lowered lance to 'scape some bough
That rained on them a rain of seeds,
As to the muster spurred they in
When war drum summoned men and steeds
With its long thunderous rolling din;
Or to the tournament of reeds
Rode gaily when the war was o'er;
Or went to beard the good wild boar.
But now no wealth of stalwart trees
Clothes with a shade the brown hillside,
Nor does the Andalusian breeze
From out the westward sweeping wide
Strike a low-sounding harp of leaves,
To ring a woodland melody
High up among the leafy eaves,
To chime with lay of chivalry
Sung of Zegri, or carolled clear
How at the bullfight Don Gazul,
The alcaydé, with dart and spear
Won Narifa the beautiful,—
Gone are the woods that heard and saw
This on the march of Cordova.

There stood now but a Moorish hold,
Built of a ruddy, tinted stone,
In ruin, yet still haught and bold,
Though o'er its face the bronze had grown
And look of long old age; its line
Of outer wall (which best endures
The gnaw of time and tooth and tyne,)
Was eaten into embrasures,
Through which was seen a horseshoe arch
Reared high, as it would bid and dare
Defiance to the ages' march.
At angle of the courtyard square
Was set a carved fountain shell
From out which came the water's play
And in a spray of stars down fell,
And falling, chimed a tinkling tune
Within a tiny lake that lay
As mirror to the demi-moon.

Here José stopped in startled awe,
For, leaning on the carven rim
Of the low balustrade, he saw,
Half hidden in the shadows dim,
A female form in Moorish guise
With pale brown face that looked at him
From out a pair of lustrous eyes
Lambent and large with languorous light,
Yet with exceeding earnestness,
As if they something would express
And speak to him if speak they might.

He knew the MOIRA, of the tale
That grandams in awed accents tell,
Who lures men by their strong desires
And draws them to the enchanted well
And offers treasure trove, but still
Her gifts oft turn to bale and ill;
Yet as he saw her keeping vise
Beside the fount she leaned above,
Flushed through his heart, hysteric-wise,
One fierce warm rush of sudden love.

Love is a torrent,—rising swift
And foaming up tumultuously,
Bearing resolve like thistle down
And sweeping caution to the sea;
Love is a fire,—a flaming wing
That scurries in its mad career,
And scorches up all living thing
And leaves the subheart parched and sere;
Thus José, by his mad weird pressed,
His incoherent love expressed:

"Beautiful being! if thou art
A spirit or a thing of form,
Thy loveliness wakes in the heart
Of him who sees thee, gust and storm
Of wild impassioned love. Be thou
My leman, Moira! 'Neath thy feet,
Even on the spot thou standest now,
Lie mines of buried Moorish gold,
Give me the treasures, I entreat,
That were hid in the days of old,
And if thou seek'st to draw to thee
A mortal lover, I am he!"

There came distinctly to his ear,
As vibrant as a lute well strung,
Responding words, low-pitched and clear
In the soft lingua franca tongue:
"At the third quarter of the moon
Return and ask, and have thy boon."

The crescent moon grew full and round
And made a daylight of the night,
Throwing in hollows of the ground
Long inky shadows on the white,
And then she waned for evenings seven,
Each night more thin and wan, and reigned

A lessening planet in the heaven,—
But all this time for good or ill,
No love note sounded near the mill.

After a fervent day of sun
The air cooled with the twilight's rise,
And vapours rose when day was done
Up from the hot earth furtively
And with thin veil the landscape hid,—
In such a night might fancy call
Up filing ghosts as sorceress did
In Endor old the ghost of Saul.

No lights shone through the evening damp
Save from the hill a tiny billow
Of smoky ray shed from the lamp
Of Padre, Cura, Fray Pedrillo,
A rotund rosy man was he
And of peculiar sanctity.

The fray a romancero read
As, seated in his chair of cane,
He pecked a little biscuit bread
And sipped a little wine of Spain,
Until 'twixt half-awake and napping
He seemed to hear a timid tapping.

"Who knocks so late? Go on your way
Who'er you be, nor seek my cell,
This is the hour in which I pray,
And there's a hospice down the dell
Wherein they do both bake and brew,
Go there, my son, your rose beads tell
And take my blessing 'long o' you."

A small hand raised the latchet pin
And Maraquita entered in.

"O holy fray! here on my knees
I come to tell a dreadful thing!
My José promised, if you please,
From Cordova to bring the ring
And make of me his bonny bride
And wed me at midsummer-tide,
But now indeed for many an eve
I have not seen him,—and I grieve.
An herbero hath told to me
The Moira of the Haunted Well
Hath ta'en from me my good José
And holds him in unholy spell;
O father! father! loose the chain
And give my sweetheart back again."

The worthy father scratched the ring
Of grey hair round his polished crown,
"Daughter, this is a fearsome thing,
Would make a Christian angel frown,
And needs the candle, book and bell,
Yet keep thy trust and faith in view,
For Holy Church can baffle spell
Of José and of Moira too,
Though, my sweet lambkin, be thou sure
'Tis hard to exorcise a Moor.
Thou, therefore, go, thy griefs express
Unto Our Lady of Bitterness,
And I will try if chaunts can quell
This pestilent wanton of the well."

Upon a round-topped sodded mound
That stood out from the hillside's steep
Which formed a dusky brown background,
In solemn loneliness and deep
Heroic size a Calvary stood.

August and dread the Holy One
Hung ghastly on the accursed tree,
As saying deathly: "It is done,
Father, am I forsook by thee?"
Around his brow the spiny crown,
The death-sweat streaming to his knee,
And ichor blood gouts dropping down
Betrayed his last dread agony,—
While at the black foot of the cross
There wept the Mother Dolorous.

Young Maraquita, crushed and prone,
With tear founts streaming from her eyes,
Knelt on the sacred mount alone
And prayed in accents full of sighs:
Madre dolorosa, hear me!
Thou thyself hast anguish known,
Be thy holy influence near me,
May thy pity easy my moan;
By thine own heart-rending pang's
By seven dolours of thy Son!
Rescue from the witch's fangs
My own dear lover . . .
Here sudden ceased her words, for she
Fell fainting by the calvary.

The mist cleared, and night's pulse stood still
Above each sleeping vale and hill,
With the concave all darkly blue
And dotted with the glance of stars,
Like eyes of angels peeping through
The chinks of heaven's lattice bars,
Till o'er the hills a space waxed clear
As if the dark were growing thin,
Until it seemed a silvery mere
That white cloud curls were sailing in,
A sheen of pearl,—and then, eftsoon!
A common miracle was wrought,