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HER. Ay, Zara, and it may be kept ; but these sad tears will change to sighs of joy when I have told thee all. Then thou wilt bless the vow which brings thee sorrow now.

ZARA. Oh, speak ! Tell me what joy canst thou give to lighten grief like mine ! Give me not too much hope ; for if it fail, despair thou canst not banish will cast a deeper gloom o'er this poor heart. Now, tell me all.

HER. Calm thyself, poor child ; it will be well with thee, and thou shalt yet blossom in thy loveliness beside the heart thou hast won. I will tell thee the true tale of thy fair mother's life. She loved and wed a stranger, and thus won the hatred of her Moorish kindred, who sought to win her for their prince's bride. And when she fled away with him to whom her true heart's love was given, they vowed a fierce revenge. Years passed away ; she drooped and died. Thy father perished bravely on the field of battle, and left his child to me. I stood beside thy mother's dying bed, and vowed to guard her babe till thou wert safe among thy Moorish kindred. I have watched thee well, and thou art worthy all the happiness thy true heart hath won. Bernardo of Castile is but thy mother's friend ; thy father was an English lord, and thou canst keep thy vow, and yet wed the brave young Englishman who hath won thy love.

ZARA. Heaven pardon this wild, wilful heart that should mourn the sorrow sent, when such deep joy as this is given. Ah, father, how can I best thank thee for the blessed comfort thou hast given ?

HER. Thy joy, dear child, is my reward. When thou art safe with him thou lovest, my task on earth is done, and I shall pass away with happy thoughts of the sweet flower that bloomed beside the old man's path through life, and cheered it with her love. Bless thee, my Zara, and may the spirit of thy mother watch above thee in the happy home thou hast gained by thy noble sacrifice.

ZARA. Oh, father, may the joy thy words have brought me brighten thine own life as they have mine. The blessings of a happy heart be on thee. Farewell, father !

*[Kneels, kisses his hand. Exit.]*

CURTAIN