

hope may fade, but duty still remains. Oh, Ernest, couldst thou but see thy own true Zara now! Wouldst thou could aid me! [*Enter ERNEST disguised.*] Ah, who comes? A stranger. Speak! thine errand!

ERNEST [*kneeling, presents a scroll.*] An English knight without the gates did bid me seek thee with this scroll May it please thee, read.

ZARA [*opens and reads*].

LADY,—Thou mayst trust the messenger. He will lead thee in safety to one who waits for thee. Delay not; danger is around thee.

Thine,

ERNEST.

Ah, here! so near me! Hope springs anew within my heart. Yes, I will go. Homeless, friendless no more! Happy Zara! joy now awaits thee. Yet stay!—my promise to Bernardo! I cannot leave him thus in danger, and alone. What shall I do? Oh, Ernest, where art thou now?

ERNEST [*throwing off disguise, and kneeling before her*]. Here, dearest Zara! here at thy feet, to offer thee a true heart's fond devotion. To thee I owe life, liberty, and happiness. Ah, let me thus repay the debt of gratitude. Thy love shalt be my bright reward; my heart thy refuge from all danger now. Wilt thou not trust me?

ZARA. Ernest, thou knowest my heart is thine, and that to thee I trust with joy my life and happiness. No vow stands now between us. I am thine.

ERNEST. Then let us hence. All is prepared; thy father shall be saved. This night shall see us on our way to liberty; and in a fairer land we may forget the danger, sorrow, and captivity that have been ours. Come, dearest, let me lead thee.

ZARA. I come; and, Ernest, 'mid the joy and bright hopes of the future, let us not forget the sorrow and sacrifice that hath won for us this happiness; and mayst thou ne'er regret the hour that gave to thee the love of the Moorish maiden, Zara.

CURTAIN