

by the hand of O'Rourke. Since then, it had gleamed in his grasp like a meteor through the fight, and his bearing now, seemed prouder, as he rested on its iron hilt. What a contrast did he form to the fair and delicate girl by his side; her white veil floated round her like a summer cloud, and radiant gems flashed on her brow. Beautiful did she look, as the genius of her native isle; and alas! in after time, it seemed as if the fate of Erin had been twined with hers. Her hand was clasped in O'Rourke's—her voice murmured the marriage vow, but her eyes and thoughts were where Mac Murtagh, folded in his silken mantle, bent o'er the golden strings of his harp. The few stern men who formed the vassals of O'Rourke, advanced to do the lady homage, and his mother, the aged Princess of Breffni, with her female attendants, and the old minstrel of the house of O'Rourke, were present, gave the bride her blessing; and the minstrel tuned his harp to the nuptial song of welcome. But in vain did he strike the note of joy—no sound would vibrate from its chords but woe—the deepest woe; in vain did he try each art he was master of, still did its silvery tones give back the echo of sorrow. The old man dropped it from his hand, and tears flowed from his eyes. O'Rourke had arisen to chide him, when Zelma, the attendant of his mother, sprang forward and sweetly the strings poured forth a strange wild music. It seemed a song of triumph, and yet it had not a pleasant sound. 'Twas not the soft sweet melody of Erin, but bore in its foreign cadence, the tones of gratified revenge. Hardly could the wine-cup of Eric, or the night song of Mac Murtagh dissipate the dreary feeling left by Zelma's music. Strange was the appearance of Zelma, and strange was her story.

A Spanish rover had made a descent on the western shores. The inhabitants fell fast before him, until O'Rourke came to their assistance, and pursued the Spaniards to their ships. The other warriors returned laden with the treasures of the rover, but the only spoil of O'Rourke, was Zelma, the daughter of the pirate whom he saved from drowning. Her height was hardly that of a child of six years. A serpent had coiled around her in her cradle—its poisonous breath had mingled with hers, and her growth was for ever stopped; yet every limb was moulded with the most graceful symmetry. The dark olive of her complexion, and the deep black of her lustrous eyes, told she was a descendant of the Moors. The nature of Zelma was that of her native land; the heart that would die for what it loved, and the unforgiv-

ing spirit that thirsts for vengeance 'till the latest hour. Although her form was that of a child, Zelma's heart was a woman's, and in gratitude she felt towards O'Rourke, as her parent, turned to love; it was unanswered, as changed to hatred, deep and inextinguishable. The generous heart of O'Rourke was grieved, and his kindness to her increased. Zelma concealed her feelings, and "bided her time. With the keen eye of a woman, she read the thoughts of Deara and Mac Murtagh. A scheme instantly flashed on her mind, and the music told as truly of her feelings at the time as the notes of the ancient minstrel were prophetic, of what the marriage of Deara would bring on the land.

Twelve months had the daughter of Eric been wedded to O'Rourke; entwined with her very existence, was his love for her, as the sun is to the earth, or dew to the flower. Without her, life to him would have been a barren waste—a dreary world without one ray of light. In the intensity of his own love, he thought not that hers might be less strong, and alas! it was so, for Mac Murtagh was so fondly remembered, although in time he might have been forgotten. The brave are always pious, and the devotions of O'Rourke now called him on a pilgrimage, to a distant shrine. The night after his departure, Deara sat in her lonely bower; Zelma entered with intelligence that a wandering minstrel sought shelter in the castle. An unnatural radiance lit her eyes. Deara desired her to conduct him to her presence. The minstrel entered, and his harp tuned to please the lady, but scarcely had the soft tones floated on the air, when the hue of her cheek grew deeper, her bosom heaved with emotion; the minstrel flung back his mantle, and Deara fell upon his bosom—it was Mac Murtagh! Zelma had gratified her revenge; she had conveyed to him intelligence of O'Rourke's absence, and of Deara's continued love, and that night the faithless lady fled from him. Beautiful and bright in the radiant sunlight, smiled the vally of O'Rourke before he as he rested on the last hill top. The heart of the Chieftain beat quicker as he gazed upon the beauties, and thought that the eye of Deara might be resting upon it also, as she looked forth for his return. The flush of rosy light faded softly from the western sky; twilight ushered the stars and pearly moon through the calm heavens, and the shadows fell deeper on the blue lake. As night gathered around, the sadness shaded the brow of O'Rourke—the gloomy walls of his castle rose against the