

Who round the shores of Corrib could excel Roderic at the sail, the oar, the rod, or the net: and who could excel in swiftness of foot, in skill and boldness in the chase, the fair-headed Donald of the wood? Dermod had his part too: assisted by old Thady, he took the charge of the flock, and protected the crops from ravage, and he also occasionally accompanied his brothers to Galway town in their stout, half-deck boat. They were a happy, united family; affectionate to one another; dutiful and attentive to their mother, who loved them all tenderly, and valued them above all the treasures of the earth. Mixing occasionally in the sports, but never in the excesses of their neighbors, they had the reputation of being above the world, for they always paid honestly for what they had, and never stooped to any mean or sordid action. The widow Fitz-Gerald, therefore, was counted a happy woman, and so indeed she was. But happiness is not a fee simple in its possession, and is exposed to many flaws. A sky ever unclouded is unknown in this world.

One fine evening early in the autumn, Donald and Dermod were reclining on one of the little rocky headlands that jut into the lake. Scarcely a ripple was upon the water, and the many islands, distant and near, were more than usually distinct from the extreme clearness of the atmosphere. The quick eye of Dermod was fixed upon a dark spot afar off, which he soon discovered to be a boat making for the shore, but studiously keeping to the northward of the Isle of Illaundarrack.

"That boat," said he to Donald, "belongs to the dark Knight of Inchagoil; one man rows it, and in the stern cowers a female. I fancy," added he, significantly, "I can see her cloak of dark blue."

Donald shook his head incredulously, and the dark cloud of sorrow passed over his face.

As the boat, however, neared, he gazed more and more eagerly, and now, springing upon his feet, was quickly lost amid the tangled thickets of the wood of Glann. Arrived at the other side of the peninsula, he unmoored a small boat, and skirting close by the shore, as if to escape observation, he rowed rapidly into one of the little bays of Currarevagh, and there springing upon the land, climbed a tall cliff, from whence unseen he could command a view of the lake and the country inland. Ere long the boat designated by Dermod as coming from Inchagoil was seen to approach, and, stealing quietly under shelter of a range of rocks, a female figure landed, after cautiously looking around, and walked rapidly up a narrow vale, that seemed to wind into the recesses of the neighboring mountain.

"It is, then, as I thought," exclaimed Donald. "Eva is paying her annual visit to the mainland, that she may perform her devotions at the Holy Well of St. Cuthbert." The young man descended from his post, and rapidly rising the hill beyond, soon looked into the little vale, and there, close to the sacred well, he saw the figure kneeling, just where an ancient and decayed ash tree threw its sheltering boughs athwart the bubbling spring. The devotions over, the young man stood at Eva's side; for it was indeed the maiden whom he loved. The meeting on his part was warm and glowing as ardent affection could make it; on her's there was manifest pleasure, indeed, but also embarrassment and fear.

"Go, Donald, said she, in a tone of decision; "remember, one year more and the Heiress of Inchagoil is her own mistress. Do not think that Eva O'Connor can ever forget the promise she made to Donald