

trary is well established by those of her own countrymen who had free access to her during her lifetime,—some of them in the hour of her death,—whose correspondence with her family would not have failed to intimate their suspicions had there been any thing to suspect.

Well would it be for the memory of Philip the Second could the historian find no heavier sin to lay to his charge than his treatment of Isabella. From first to last he seems to have regarded her with the indulgence of an affectionate husband. Whether she ever obtained such an ascendancy over his close and cautious nature as to be allowed to share in his confidence and his counsels, may well be doubted. Her temper would seem to have been too gentle, too devoid of worldly ambition, to prompt her to meddle with affairs for which she was fitted neither by nature nor education. Yet Brantôme assures us that she exercised a most salutary influence over her lord in his relations with France, and that the value of this influence was appreciated in later times, when the growing misunderstandings between the two courts were left to rankle, without any friendly hand to heal them.<sup>39</sup> “Her

of the king: “Quelquesuns soupçonnerent Philippe de l'avoir fait empoisonner, parce qu'il lui avoit fait un crime de la trop grande familiarité qu'elle avoit avec Dom Carlos. Il est néanmoins facile de se convaincre du contraire, par la grande et sincère douleur que sa mort causa, tant à la Cour que dans toute l'Espagne; le Roi la pleura, comme une femme qu'il aimoit tres-tendrement.” *Histoire universelle*, tom. v. p. 437.

<sup>39</sup> Brantôme, *Œuvres*, tom. v. p. 137.—Yet Isabella's mother, Catherine de Medicis, found fault with her daughter, in the interview at Bayonne, for having become altogether a Spaniard, saying to her, tauntingly, “*Muy Española venis.*” To which the queen meekly re-