

among women for beauty and high womanly courage and perfect devotion.

But there were a few who were ill pleased; for Antonio Perez said nothing, and absently smoothed his black hair with his immaculate white hand, and the Princess of Eboli was very silent, too, for it seemed to her that Don John's sudden marriage, and his reconciliation with his brother, had set back the beginning of her plan beyond the bounds of possible accomplishment; and she was right in that, and the beginning of her resentment against Don John for having succeeded in marrying Dolores in spite of every one was the beginning of the chain that led her to her own dark fate. For though she held the cards long in her hands after that, and played for high stakes, as she had done before, fortune failed her at the last, and she came to unutterable ruin.

It may be, too, that Don John's splendid destiny was measured on that night, and cut off beforehand, though his most daring fights were not yet fought, nor his greatest victories won. To tell more here would be to tell too much, and much, too, that is well told elsewhere. But this is true, that he loved Dolores with all his heart; that the marriage remained a court secret; and that she bore him one fair daughter, and died, and the child grew up under another reign, a holy nun, and was abbess of the convent of Las Huelgas whither Dolores was to have gone on the morning after that most eventful night.