

river was rushing along through the middle of the valley, presenting in its course, noisy cascades, broken arches, and the remains of a Moorish bridge. Aben-Hamet was neither so unfortunate nor so happy as to enjoy thoroughly the charms of solitude. He wandered with distraction and indifference over those enchanted banks. Walking at hap-hazard, he followed a leafy alley that circled the side of the Albaizyn. A country house surrounded by a grove of orange trees soon appeared before his eyes. Whilst approaching the grove, he heard the sound of a voice and of a guitar.

"That is my Hourri," said Aben-Hamet.

He listens with beating heart to the name of the Abencerrage several times repeated; his heart beats still more quickly; he cannot resist; he throws himself through a bunch of myrtles and falls in the midst of a troop of young girls who fly terrified. The Spanish girl who has just sung and still holds the guitar cries out, "It is the gallant Moor;" and she recalls her companions. "Favorite of fairies" said the Abencerrage, "I sought thee as the Arab seeks a spring in the heat of noon; I heard the sound of thy guitar, thou wert celebrating the heroes of my country; I knew thee by the beauty of thy voice; I bring to thy feet the heart of Aben-Hamet." "And I," replied Dona Blanca, "it was whilst thinking of you that I sung again the tale of the Abencerrage. Since I saw you, I imagined that those noble Moors must resemble you."

A light blush was visible on her brow; Aben-Hamet felt ready to fall at the feet of the young Christian, to declare to her that he was the last Abencerrage, but prudence restrained him; he feared that his name, too famous in Granada, might cause the government some uneasiness. The Moorish war had hardly terminated, and the presence of an Abencerrage at this moment would inspire the Spaniards with just fears.

Dona Blanca was descended from a family which took its origin from the Cid of Bivar and Chimène, daughter of Count Gomez of Gormas. The posterity of the conqueror of "Valence la Belle," fell by the ingratitude of the Court of Castile into extreme poverty. It was thought for many years that it had entirely become extinct; but about the time of the taking of Granada, one last descendant of the house of Bivar,—the grandfather of Blanca—made himself known, much less by his titles than by his shining valor.