

know, to look so high; but have you not told me you love me, and does not that equalize all distinctions of rank? Let us then leave this court, and together seek some land where my song and my sword, shall win for me envied distinction, and where we can live and love unmolested."

"Ah, Luis! you know not what you ask. How can we escape, girdled as we are with watchful eyes, no motion unmarked? Who knows but even now they are tracking our steps?"

"So much the more need then, dearest, for us to fly. You know not how soon you proud Spanish lord may be here, to bear you to the formal court of Madrid. In my troubled fancy, methinks even now I hear the stately pace of him and his retinue. Oh, Isadore! if he once sees you, my hopes are crushed—"

"No, Camoëns; I will throw myself upon his kindness. Though naughty, he is generous. I will tell him I love another, and if that does not move him, at the very altar, before even the most holy Bishop, will I refuse to utter with false lips the vow without which there can be no bridal."

"A most maidenly resolution indeed, and well worthy the royal blood of Portugal," said the stern voice of Emmanuel, who had approached unperceived near enough to catch the last sentence. "Many thanks, fair cousin, for your consideration for our honour; but you seem to have forgotten that our will is law in this realm, and that our pledged word cannot be broken, to please a love-sick princess. But we will disenchant you of these delusions."

"You have yet to learn, cousin mine," said Isadore, her composure restored by the sarcastic tone in which the king addressed her, and her spirit excited by being thus made a royal plaything: "You have yet to learn that the blood which flows in this slender frame is as resolute as that which gives strength to your manly arm; and I swear," said she, dropping on her knees, and clasping her hands, "that sooner than wed at your bidding, you Spanish noble, I will consecrate my life to a convent."

"Well, fair one, so be it," said the king in a soothing voice, thinking it better to allay the spirit he had so unwittingly conjured up, "we will talk of this some other time—we must now return to yonder hall; your absence has long since been noted. As for you ingrate," he continued, turning to Camoëns, who stood undaunted, with folded arms and erect head; "You are a rebel to our royal commands, and are now a prisoner. What ho, Fernando!" A young page sprang forward at the word: "Summon the Captain of the Guard hither."

"Spare him, spare him, this once," said Isadore, "and I will promise never to speak to him, never to see him again."

"Isadore, I would not purchase liberty at such a price," said Camoëns. "I am now the king's prisoner; but be you firm, and the time may yet come when we shall both be free from the iron rule which would bend hearts to its will, even at the risk of breaking them."

The king turned with lowering brow to reprove the daring speaker, but he heard the footsteps of the approaching guard. Taking the cloak from Camoëns, he threw it lightly over Isadore, to conceal her from the gaze of the soldiers, whose torches shed a fitful light upon every object.

"Place this madcap in ward," he said to the officer who waited his commands. "See that he escape not; I have matters to settle with him."

The king chose that Isadore should return with him to the festive hall, though she plead for permission to retire to her own apartments; he feared the remarks of the gossiping court, if neither she nor Camoëns appeared again among them.

The next day the king commanded Camoëns to be brought before him. What passed between them at this interview is unrecorded; all that is known, is that the youthful poet was missed from the courtly circle, and his sudden disappearance excited some surprise. Question and surmise were hazarded, but it was soon found to be a disagreeable subject to the ear of royalty, and in a few days a visitor at the court of Lisbon would not have known that such a being as Luis de Camoëns existed, much less that he had ever shone the brightest luminary that circled round Emmanuel. Ere a month passed, Ponce de Leon came to claim his bride. She received him with cold disdain; but her beauty fascinated him, and trusting to win her love, he pressed on the marriage. The morning came; the many bells of Lisbon rang forth the bridal peal; processions were formed, and flowers scattered in the path the fair young bride was to take. The Bishop, in his holy robes, waited to perform the ceremony in the great church of San José. But they came not, the youthful pair. When they sought for the bride, and trusted to find her in her nuptial robes, she was gone. One favorite attendant was the partner of her flight, and the rest were weeping and fearing the anger of the king. No clue could be found to her place of refuge, and none knew the fate of Isadore de Santarene, till years after, a sister in a far-off convent died, and on her death-bed confessed, that she was the long sought for cousin of the king—Isadore de Santarene.