

### Princess Ismeria

The Sultan had a daughter, called Ismeria, "an accomplished lady, of exquisite beauty, ready of speech and learned in the Mohammedan law". The Knights, thought the Sultan, will not withstand the "bewitching" arguments of Ismeria's beauty and charms. So he sent her to them, with orders to use all means, reasons, reproaches, charms, caresses, and, if necessary, to sacrifice even her honor ! But the Mother of God was watching over her good and loyal servants and looked mercifully upon the youthful Princess whose honor a heartless father was ready to surrender.

The result of the first discussion was to raise a thousand doubts in Ismeria's soul regarding the religion of Mohammed. At the second interview, the Knights, God-inspired and filled with the Holy Ghost, related to her the sublime mysteries of the Incarnation of the Word, the Life, Miracles, Death, Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus Christ, the virtues, excellencies and incomparable Virginity of the glorious Virgin Mary, before, during and after the Birth of Christ. The Princess was deeply moved : "Their words were as so many fiery sparks, which, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, gradually kindled in her soul the light of Faith and inflamed her heart with a holy yearning to embrace it".

The following visits only added new zest to these holy desires. She felt drawn especially towards the august Virgin Mary. So much so that, thinking of her day and night, she conceived "an extreme desire to see the portrait of the Mother of God, of whom she had heard such great things". One day she asked the Knights if they did not happen to have a picture of that Most Holy Virgin. They said they had not.—