

Hamet reflected then upon the vicissitudes of fortune, the fall of empires, and finally upon that city Granada, surprised by its enemies in the midst of pleasure, and suddenly changing its flowery garlands for heavy chains of slavery. All these thoughts were pressing Aben-Hamet's heart. Full of grief and regret, he wished above all to execute the project which had led him to Granada; day surprised him. The Abencerrage had wandered too far.

Whilst endeavoring to find again his route, Aben-Hamet heard a door open. He saw a young girl go out, clothed like those Gothic queens sculptured on the monuments of our ancient abbeys; a black mantle was cast over her head, a duenna accompanied her step; a page carried before her a church-book, while two servants, brilliant with their colors, followed at some distance the fair unknown.

Aben-Hamet thought he saw an angel, or the youngest of the Houris. The Spanish girl, not less surprised, was looking at the Abencerrage, whose turban, dress, and arms rendered more commanding his noble figure.

Recovered from her first astonishment, with a grace and liberty peculiar to the women of that country, she made a sign to the stranger to approach. "Sir Moor," said she; "you appear to have lately come to Granada; have you lost your way?" "Sultana of the flowers," answered Aben-Hamet; "delight of man's eyes, O Christian slave, more beautiful than the virgins of Georgia, thou hast divined it! I am a stranger in this city, lost in the midst of these palaces. I cannot find the Kan of the Moors. May Mahomet touch thy heart and reward thy hospitality." "The Moors are renowned for their gallantry," replied the Spanish girl with a sweet smile, "but I am neither Sultana of the flowers, nor slave, nor contented with being recommended to Mahomet. Follow me, Sir Moor; I will conduct you to the Kan." She led him to the door of the Kan, pointed it out to him, passed behind a palace and disappeared.

The land of his ancestors no longer fills alone and entire Aben-Hamet's heart. Granada had ceased to be for him deserted, abandoned, solitary; in vain does he wish to occupy himself only with the pilgrimage to the land of his fathers; in vain does he gather plants upon the banks of the Darro and Xenil; the flower that he seeks is the beautiful Christian.

One day he was gathering herbs in the valley of the Darro. The