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He gave me a little eager glance, and was going to reply quickly, when he checked himself, paused, and then in the former tone said—

“We wish to consult your desires so far as possible, my lord ; but the senorita took a very active part even in the plot against me.”

“I am in your Majesty’s hands, of course, but such a step is a strange way of consulting my desires.”

“I am not so sure of that,” he cried quickly, with a boyish smile. “At least, I mean that you have been such a friend to me that I am convinced you would not wish me to do anything that my advisers consider unwise.”

“We did not speak in this strain as we rode back that evening from Podrida. I do not recall any conditions about your Majesty’s advisers or even mention of them.”

“You are very difficult to deal with, senor, and are making my task very hard,” he said, protestingly.

“I have not the honour to know what your Majesty’s task is,” said I, puzzled by his words.

“It has been found necessary, in the interests which I have at heart, to pass a sentence upon the senorita—in some respects a heavy sentence.” He used the same over-serious tone, but as he looked up into my face I saw laughter in his eyes, and when he finished, the smile spread over his face.

“It is your Majesty’s prerogative to command,” I answered.

“Yes,” he cried, eagerly. “Yes, this is my own doing. I have seen Senorita Castelar. I spoke of my advisers just now ; but this is not their doing, it is all my work. That may make you agree to it, even if the punishment