

grandees of Spain, with whom Emmanuel was desirous of strengthening the bonds of friendship. But Camoëns cared not for this; he loved,—and he determined to win the fair Isadore, presuming too much on the kindness which the king had always shown him, and trusting to his partiality, to forgive an error caused by love; a passion for which Emmanuel was supposed to have great sympathy, as he had himself suffered deeply from his long and devoted attachment, which was for many years unrewarded, even by a gleam of hope. Neither did Camoëns think of, or care for the anger of the proudest hidalgo in Spain, whose revengeful hate would probably follow him to the death, if he crossed his path. Love so wreathed with flowers the heavy fetters he cast over him, that he heeded not their ominous clinking, and saw not the fate to which they were binding him.

Isadore was shy and reserved. Unused to the gaieties of a court, she shrunk from mingling in them, and night after night, in the midst of the courtly revels, would she, refusing to join in the dance or song, place herself by the side of the sad and suffering Isabella, whose life was passing away under the withering influence of some unknown malady, so gently, however, that even her loving husband, in whose heart she had been enshrined from his earliest youth, knew not that the life current was ebbing, and that the shroud was already worn which was to enwrap the fair form of his beloved. Isabella was pleased with the gentle Isadore, and found some relief for the sadness of her own full heart, in soothing the perturbed spirit of the guileless girl, who but for her would have pined for the quiet seclusion of the convent in which she had been educated. Camoëns had always been a favourite with his royal mistress. She delighted to converse with him; to draw forth his powers, and make him display his brilliant wit, and the varied stores of his cultivated intellect. By degrees Isadore, who had at first listened with downcast eyes, and rather dreaded the poet's approach, learned to look for it with eagerness. His gentleness and grace won her confidence, and his respectful homage, unlike the free manners of the courtiers, soon gained her attachment. She had been brought up in the strictest seclusion; she was betrothed in her childhood to Ponce de Leon, whom she had never seen; but whose chivalric virtues had been made the theme of constant conversation with her, till she fancied herself devotedly attached to him. But this ideal attachment was not strong enough to withstand the fascinations of the accomplished Camoëns, and when the idol of the court knelt at her feet, she broke and cast aside the withes which bound her to the Spanish noble. The jealous courtiers marked with pleasure the grow-

ing attachment of the youthful pair, for they foresaw in it the means of ruin to Camoëns, whose high favour with the sovereign and ladies of the court they envied, and whose downfall they had often plotted. He had hitherto escaped with singular good fortune the bravo's knife, which had been sharpened at the instigation of a jealous husband or lover; but now his own hands were digging the pit into which he was sure to fall. The Portuguese nobles knew full well that Emmanuel, generous as he was, would never forgive any interference with his plans. The father of the young Ponce de Leon was a favoured servant of the united sovereigns of Spain, and it was Isabella's fervent wish to see them rewarded for their fidelity to her parents, by this most desirable union, with the blood royal of Portugal. It had been arranged that the nuptials should take place in a few months, and it was that Isadore might be prepared to perform her part in the formal court of Spain, that she had been withdrawn from her retirement and placed under the protection of the queen.

It was long before the king perceived the change in his gentle cousin; indeed, so absorbed was he in state matters, it would probably have been entirely unnoticed by him, had not his attention been called to it by the queen. With her heart filled with love and sympathy for every thing human, she marked with deep regret the growing attachment of the young people, and reproached herself for not foreseeing this to be the consequence of their close intercourse. She thought it best they should understand their true position before it was too late. His attention once excited, the king himself perceived the danger, and, summoning Camoëns to a private audience, he most kindly, though firmly, expressed his disapprobation of any attempt to win the affections of the young princess, and forbade him, on pain of his displeasure and banishment from his country, to hold any other intercourse with her, than that required by the etiquette of the court. With his threats, he coupled promises of advancement and protection in case he were obeyed.

Irritated and unhappy, Camoëns left the royal presence; for the first time the obstacles to his union with Isadore, appeared insurmountable, but he could not give up the cherished hope. He determined to assume a course of conduct which would be likely to lull the suspicions of the monarch, trusting to some fortunate chance to secure him future success. Again did he, in seeming neglect of Isadore, pay his homage to the gay ladies of the court, flitting from one to another, writing impassioned love sonnets, and bribing duennas to convey them to those to whom