

The faithful and untiring care of his two attendants saved Seigneur van Hessfeldt's life, but there came a time in the earlier stages of his convalescence, when the faces and accents of his Spanish nurses disturbed and excited him so much, that Marie was obliged to take the duties of the sick-room on herself.

It was on this day that Bertrand found Anita in Marie's sitting-room, and said to her, laughingly, "I am glad that you are taking a holiday, nurse. I have been telling Albrecht he will wear you out."

Anita tried to answer lightly, but her lips trembled, and she could not speak.

Bertrand came a step or two nearer, and said gently, "Is anything troubling you, Anita?"

She hesitated. "It is only that—your people—your brother cannot bear to have us near him, because we are Spanish. I have been thinking that Isabella and I had better go to England, or somewhere, where people will not hate us"——

"Hate you, Anita; don't you know that we all love you? You must be mistaken; Albrecht never could have meant that. If he did he would be the most ungrateful wretch alive. Why, you saved his life and Marie's too, I believe."

Anita did not answer, and he went on, "If you go away, Anita, I will go, too. I said just now, 'we love you,' but I want to tell you that I love you; I have loved you ever since I first saw you on *The Avenger*. Won't you stay with us and take my people for your people? Your own have cast you off, so you owe nothing to them?"