

KING.—(*aside.*) Vexatious interference! (*aloud.*) You translated it? Then do the same kind office for us, you must be aware that we are unlearned in the language.

DE N.—I obey your Majesty. (*receives letter from King, and reads.*) 'Beloved daughter! the King, your husband, is involved in a disgraceful liason.'

KING.—Disgraceful! insolent.

DE N.—A disgraceful liason, of which your Majesty alone is ignorant. Madlle de la Valliere, the object of this criminal passion, is capable of any artifice to alienate his affections; and, if not instantly dismissed from the household of the Duchess d'Orleans, and banished the court, your happiness, and the King's honour—

KING.—(*angrily.*) Hold! we will hear no more! who can have dared! The Queen, you say, has not seen this infamous document.

DE N.—She has not, Sir.

KING.—Tell me, quickly, is there any one of the courtiers sufficiently conversant with Spanish.

DE N.—(*Interrupting.*) The Signora di Molina, and Phillipa, are the only Spaniards allowed to remain in attendance on her Majesty. (*aside.*) The rest he has dismissed.

KING.—That is not the question. Who, I repeat, among the courtiers, know enough of Spanish to indite a letter—and such a letter?

DE N.—I know of none, except indeed Monsr. de Lauzun or the Count de Guiche.

KING.—De Lauzun! enough Madam! who waits!

*Enter Chamarante.*

KING.—Conduct the Duchess de Navailles. Inform the Count de Guiche we require his presence on the instant. Send Bontemps to us presently. (*bows to de Navailles, who goes out, accompanied by Chamarante.*) I must question de Guiche, and shall then be prepared to deal with de Lauzun.

*Enter de Guiche.*

DE G.—Your Majesty commands my attendance. (*aside.*) What can he want? Ha! (*sees letter in the King's hands, and becomes agitated.*)

KING.—(*not remarking his agitation.*) Here is a letter, Monsr. de Guiche, its tendency most injurious to others, as well as to ourself. Read it, (*gives letter,*) and favour us with your opinion as to the author of the vile calumnies it contains.

DE G.—(*aside, pretending to read.*) Does he suspect! 'Beloved daughter, hum! ha! no he cannot! I may yet mislead him. The Queen cannot have seen it. How came it in his possession?

KING.—Well, Sir! do you recognise the hand?

DE G.—I have some idea that the writing is familiar to me. (*aside.*) Impudence, and all the powers that inspire it, assist me now with self-possession!

KING.—You understand Spanish?

DE G.—Indifferently, your Majesty. Barely sufficient to—

KING.—No matter! know you the hand?

DE G.—I must confess, I have seen writing remarkably like it.

KING.—Ha! whose? tell me, whose?

DE G.—Your Majesty must excuse me, it would be indiscreet.