

Far from attempting to disguise her feelings in this matter, she displayed them openly in her correspondence with her mother, and before her husband and the world.

Soon after Isabella's arrival at Madrid, we find a letter from the bishop of Limoges to Charles the Ninth, her brother, informing him that "his sister, on entering the palace of Madrid, gave the prince so gracious and affectionate a reception, that it afforded singular contentment to the king, and yet more to Carlos, as appeared by his frequent visits to the queen, — as frequent as the etiquette of a court, much stiffer than that of Paris, would permit."⁶ Again, writing in the following month, the bishop speaks of the queen as endeavoring to amuse Carlos, when he came to see her in the evening, with such innocent games and pastimes as might cheer the spirits of the young prince, who seemed to be wasting away under his malady.⁷

The next year we have a letter to Catherine de Medicis from one of Isabella's train, who had accompanied her from France. After speaking of her mistress as sometimes supping in the garden with the princess Joanna, she says they were often joined there by "the

⁶ "Monsieur le prince d'Hespaigne fort extenué, la vint saluer, qu'elle receut avec telle caresse et comportement, que si le père et toute la compaignie en ont receu ung singulier contentement ledit prince l'a encores plus grand, comme il a démontré depuis et démontre lorsqu'il la visite, qui ne peut estere souvent; car outre que les conversations de ce pays ne sont pas si fréquentes et faciles qu'en France, sa fièvre quarte le travaille tellement, que de jour en jour il va s'exténuant." L'Évêque

de Limoges au Roi, 23 février, 1559. *Négociations relatives au Règne de François II.*, p. 272.

⁷ "Ayant ladite dame mis toute la peine qu'il a esté possible à luy donner, aux soirs, quelque plaisir du bail et autres honnestes passe-temps, desquels il a bon besoin, car le pauvre prince est si bas et exténué, il va d'heure à heure tant affoiblissant, que les plus sages de ceste court en ont bien petite espérance." L'Évêque de Limoges au Roi, 1^{er} mars, 1559, *Ibid.*, p. 291.

prince, who loves the queen singularly well, and, as I suspect, would have no objection to be more nearly related to her."⁸—There is nothing improbable in the supposition that Carlos, grateful for kindness to which he had not been too much accustomed, should, as he grew older, have yielded to the influence of a princess whose sweet disposition and engaging manners seem to have won the hearts of all who approached her; or that feelings of resentment should have mingled with his regret, as he thought of the hard fate which had placed a barrier between them. It is impossible, too, when we consider the prince's impetuous temper, that the French historian, De Thou, may have had good authority for asserting that Carlos, "after long conversation in the queen's apartment, was often heard, as he came out, to complain loudly of his father's having robbed him of her."⁹ But it could have been no vulgar passion that he felt for Isabella, and certainly it received no encouragement from her, if, as Brantôme tells us, "insolent and audacious as he was in his intercourse with all other women, he never came into the presence of his step-mother without such a feeling of reverence as seemed to change his very nature."

Nor is there the least evidence that the admiration excited by the queen, whether in Carlos or in the courtiers, gave any uneasiness to Philip, who seems

⁸ "La royne et la princesse la visitent bien souvent, et s'oyent en un jardin qui est auprès de la maison, et le prince avec elles, qui aime la royne singulièrement, de façon qu'il ne ce peut soler de an dire bien. *Je croys qu'il voudroit estre davantage son parent.*" Claude de à la Reine Mère, août, 1560, *Ibid.*, p. 460.

⁹ "On entendit aussi très-souvent ce jeune Prince, lorsqu'il sortoit de la chambre de la Reine Elizabeth, avec qui il avoit de longs et fréquens entretiens, se plaindre et marquer sa colere et son indignation, de ce que son pere la lui avoit enlevée." De Thou, *Histoire Universelle*, tom. v. p. 434.

to have reposed entire confidence in her discretion. And while we find Isabella speaking of Philip to her mother as "so good a husband, and rendering her so happy by his attentions, that it made the dullest spot in the world agreeable to her,"¹⁰ we meet with a letter from the French minister, Guibert, saying that "the king goes on loving the queen more and more, and that her influence has increased threefold within the last few months."¹¹ A few years later, in 1565, St. Sulpice, then ambassador in Madrid, writes to the queen-mother in emphatic terms of the affectionate intercourse that subsisted between Philip and his consort. "I can assure you, madam," he says, "that the queen, your daughter, lives in the greatest content in the world, by reason of the perfect friendship which ever draws her more closely to her husband. He shows her the most unreserved confidence, and is so cordial in his treatment of her as to leave nothing to be desired."¹² The writer quotes a declaration made to him by Philip, that "the loss of his consort would be a heavier misfortune than had ever yet befallen him."¹³

Nor was this an empty profession in the king, as he evinced by his indulgence of Isabella's tastes,—even those national tastes which were not always in accordance with the more rigid rules of Castilian etiquette. To show the freedom with which she

¹⁰ "Vous dirès-ge, madame, que sy se n'estoit la bonne compaignie où je suis en se lieu, et l'heur que j'ay un si bon mari et suis si heureuse que, quant il le seroit cent

fois davantage, je ne m'y fâcherois point." *La Reine Catholique à la Reine Mère, Négociations relatives au Règne de François II.* p. 813.

¹¹ Raumer, *Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, vol. i. p. 129.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 130.

¹³ *Ibid.*, ubi supra.

lived, I may perhaps be excused for touching on a few particulars, already noticed in a previous chapter. On her coming into the country, she was greeted with balls and other festivities, to which she had been accustomed in the gay capital of France. Her domestic establishment was on a scale of magnificence suited to her station; and the old courtier, Brantôme, dwells with delight on the splendid profusion of her wardrobe, and the costly jewels with which it was adorned. When she went abroad, she dispensed with her veil, after the fashion of her own country, though so much at variance with the habits of the Spanish ladies. Yet it made her a greater favorite with the people, who crowded around her wherever she appeared, eager to catch a glimpse of her beautiful features. She brought into the country a troop of French ladies and waiting-women, some of whom remained, and married in Castile. Such as returned home, she provided with liberal dowries. To persons of her own nation she was ever accessible,—receiving the humblest as well as the highest, says her biographer, with her wonted benignity. With them she conversed in her native tongue. But, in the course of three months, her ready wit had so far mastered the Castilian, that she could make herself understood in that language, and in a short time spoke it with elegance, though with a slight foreign accent, not unpleasing. Born and bred among a people so different from that with whom her lot was now cast, Isabella seemed to unite in her own person the good qualities of each. The easy vivacity of the French character was so happily tempered by the gravity of the Spanish,

as to give an inexpressible charm to her manners.¹⁴ Thus richly endowed with the best gifts of nature and of fortune, it is no wonder that Elizabeth of France should have been the delight of the courtly circle over which she presided, and of which she was the greatest ornament.

Her gentle nature must have been much disturbed by witnessing the wild, capricious temper of Carlos, and the daily increasing estrangement of his father. Yet she did not despair of reclaiming him. At least, we may infer so from the eagerness with which she seconded her mother in pressing the union of her sister, Catherine de Medicis' younger daughter, with the prince. "My sister is of so excellent a disposition," the queen said to Ruy Gomez, "that no princess in Christendom would be more apt to moderate and accommodate herself to my step-son's humors, or be better suited to the father, as well as the son, in their relations with each other."¹⁵ But although the minister readily adopted the queen's views in the matter, they met with little encouragement from Philip, who, at that time, seemed more inclined to a connection with the house of Austria.

In the preceding chapter, we have seen the pain occasioned to Isabella by the arrest of Carlos. Although so far a gainer by it as it opened to her own posterity the way to the succession, she wept, as the ambassador Fourquevaulx tells us, for two days, over the misfortune of her step-son, until forbidden by

¹⁴ "Ceste taille, elle l'accompagnoit d'un port, d'une majesté, d'un geste, d'un marcher et d'une grace entremeslée de l'espagnole et de la françoise en gravité et en douceur." See Brantôme (Œuvres, tom. v. p.

129.), whose loyal pencil has traced the lineaments of Isabella as given in the text.

¹⁵ Raumer, Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, vol. i. p. 131.

Philip to weep any longer.¹⁶ During his confinement, as we have seen, she was not permitted to visit him,—not even to soften the bitterness of his dying hour. And how much her presence would have soothed him, at such a time, may be inferred from the simple memorandum found among his papers, in which he assigns her the first place among his friends, as having been ever the most loving to him.¹⁷ The same affection, however we may define it, which he had borne her from the first, he retained to the last hour of his life. All that was now granted to Isabella was the sad consolation of joining with the princess Joanna, and the few friends who still cherished the memory of Carlos, in celebrating his funeral obsequies.

Not long after that event, it was announced that the queen was pregnant; and the nation fondly hoped that it would find a compensation for the loss of its rightful prince, in the birth of a new heir to the throne. But this hope was destined soon to be destroyed. Owing to some mismanagement on the part of the physicians, who, at an early period, misunderstood the queen's situation, the medicines they gave her had an injurious effect on her constitution.¹⁸ It is certain that Isabella placed little confidence in the Spanish doctors, or in their prescriptions.¹⁹ There may have

¹⁶ Letter of Fourquevaulx, February 5. 1568, ap. *Ibid.*, p. 139.

¹⁷ "Gli amici, in primo loco la Regina, la quale diceva che gli era amorevolissima, Don Giovanni d' Austria suo carissimo 'et diletis-simozio," etc. Lettera del Nunzio, Marzo 2. 1568, MS.

¹⁸ Letter of Fourquevaulx, October 3. 1568, ap. Raumer, *Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, vol. i. p. 158.

¹⁹ "Pero la Reyna hacia muy poco caudal de lo que los medicos decian dando á entender con su Real condicion y gracioso semblante tener poca necesidad de sus medicinas." *Relacion de la Enfermedad y Essequias funebres de la Serenissima Reyna de España Doña Ysabel de Valois*, por Juan Lopez, Catedratico del Estudio de Madrid (Madrid, 1569), fol. 4.

been good ground for her distrust; for their vigorous applications savor not a little of the Sangrado school of practice, directed quite as much against the constitution of the patient as against his disease. About the middle of September a fever set in, which, though not violent, was so obstinate as to defy all the efforts of the physicians to reduce it. More alarming symptoms soon followed. The queen frequently swooned. Her extremities became torpid. Medicines were of no avail, for her stomach refused to retain them.²⁰ Processions were everywhere made to the churches, and young and old joined in prayers for her recovery. But these prayers were not heard. The strength of Isabella continued rapidly to decline, and by the last of September her life was despaired of. The physicians declared that science could go no further, and that the queen's only hope must be in Heaven.²¹—In Heaven she had always trusted; nor was she so wedded to the pomps and glories of the world, that she could not now willingly resign them.

As her ladies, many of them her countrywomen, stood weeping around her bed, she endeavored to console them under their affliction, kindly expressing the interest she took in their future welfare, and her regret that she had not made them a better mistress; —“as if,” says a contemporary, who has left a

²⁰ *Ibid.*, ubi supra.

The learned professor has given the various symptoms of the queen's malady with as curious a minuteness as if he had been concocting a medical report. As an order was issued, shortly after the publication of the work, prohibiting its sale, copies of it are exceedingly rare.

²¹ Quintana, *Historia de Madrid*, fol. 390.—Letter of Fourquevaux, October 3. 1568, ap. Raumer *Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, vol. i. p. 139. — Juan Lopez, *Relacion de la Enfermedad de la Reyna Ysabel*, ubi supra. — Pincelo, *Anales de Madrid*, MS.

minute record of her last moments, "she had not been always more of a mother than a mistress to them all!"²²

On the evening of the second of October, as Isabella felt herself drawing near her end, she made her will. She then confessed, partook of the sacrament, and, at her desire, extreme unction was administered to her. Cardinal Espinosa and the king's confessor, the bishop of Cuenca, who were present, while they offered her spiritual counsel and consolation, were greatly edified by her deportment; and, giving her their parting benediction, they went away deeply affected by the spirit of Christian resignation which she displayed.²³

Before daybreak, on the following morning, she had her last interview with Philip. We have the account of it from Fourquevaux. "The queen spoke to her husband very naturally," says the ambassador, "and like a Christian. She took leave of him for ever, and never did princess show more goodness and piety. She commended to him her two daughters, and her principal attendants, beseeching him to live in amity with the king of France, her brother, and to maintain peace,—with other discourse, which could not fail to touch the heart of a *good husband, which the king was to her*. He showed, in his replies, the same composure as she did, and promised to obey all her requests, but added, he did not think her end so near. He then withdrew,—as

²² "Porque en efecto, el modo y manera con que ella las trataba, no hera de senora á quien pareciesen servir, sino de madre y compañera." Juan Lopez, Relacion de la

Enfermedad de la Reyna Ysabel, loc cit.

²³ Ibid.—Pinelo, Anales de Madrid, MS.

I was told,—in great anguish, to his own chamber.”²⁴ Philip sent a fragment of the true cross, to comfort his wife in her last moments. It was the most precious of his relics, and was richly studded with pearls and diamonds.²⁵ Isabella fervently kissed the sacred relic, and held it, with the crucifix, in her hand, while she yet lived.

Not long after the interview with her husband, the ambassador was summoned to her bedside. He was the representative of her native land, and of the dear friends there she was never more to see. “She knew me,” writes Fourquevaulx, “and said, ‘You see me in the act of quitting this vain world, to pass to a more pleasant kingdom; there, as I hope, to be forever with my God. Tell my mother, the queen, and the king, my brother, to bear my death with patience, and to comfort themselves with the reflection, that no happiness on earth has ever made me so content, as the prospect now does of approaching my Creator. I shall soon be in a better situation to do them service, and to implore God to take them and my brothers under his holy protection. Beseech them, in my name, to watch over their kingdom, that an end may be put to the heresies which have spread there. And I will pray Heaven, in its mercy, to grant that they may take my death with patience, and hold me for happy.’”²⁶

²⁴ Letter of Fourquevaulx, October 3. 1568, ap. Raumer Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, vol. i. p. 159.

²⁵ “Había ordenado se tragese el lignum crucis del Rey nuestro Señor, que es una muy buena parte

que con grandismo hornato de oro y perlas de supremo valor S. M. tiene.” Juan Lopez, Relacion de la Enfermedad de la Reyna Ysabel.

²⁶ Letter of Fourquevaulx, ap. Raumer, Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, vol. i. p. 159.

The ambassador said a few words of comfort, endeavoring to give her, if possible, some hopes of life. But she answered, "You will soon know how near I am to my end. God has given me grace to despise the world and its grandeur, and to fix all my hopes on him and Jesus Christ. Never did a thought occasion me less anxiety than that of death."

"She then listened to the exhortations of her confessor, remaining in full possession of her consciousness, till a few minutes before her death. A slight restlessness seemed to come over her, which soon subsided, and she expired so tranquilly that it was impossible to fix the moment when she gave up the ghost. Yet she opened her eyes once, bright and glancing, and it seemed as if she would address me some further commands,—at least, her looks were fixed on me."²⁷

Not long before Isabella's death, she was delivered of a daughter. Its birth was premature, and it lived only to be baptized. The infant was laid in the same coffin with its mother; and, that very evening, their remains were borne in solemn procession to the royal chapel.²⁸ The tolling of the bells in the churches and monasteries throughout the city announced the

²⁷ Ibid., loc. cit.

The correspondence of the French ambassador, Fourquevaulx, is preserved, in MS., in the Royal Library at Paris. Raumer, with his usual judgment, has freely extracted from it; and the freedom with which I have drawn upon him shows the importance of his extracts to the illustration of the present story. I regret that my knowledge of the existence of this

correspondence came too late to allow me to draw from the original sources.

²⁸ "Bistieron a la Reyna de habito de S. Francisco, y la pusieron en un ataud poniendo con ella la infanta que en poco espacio habiendo racebido agua de Espiritu Santo murió." Juan Lopez, Relacion de la Enfermedad de la Reyna Ysabel.

sad tidings to the people, who filled the air with their cries, making everywhere the most passionate demonstrations of grief²⁹; for the queen, says Brantôme, "was regarded by them not merely with feelings of reverence, but of idolatry."³⁰

In the chapel were gathered together whatever was illustrious in the capital, — the high ecclesiastics, and the different religious bodies, the *grandees* and cavaliers of the court, and the queen's ladies of honor. At the head of these stood the duchess of Alva, the mistress of the robes, with the duchess of Feria — an English lady, married to the Spanish ambassador at the court of Mary Tudor — and the princess of Eboli, a name noted in history. The coffin of the deceased queen, covered with its gorgeous pall of brocade, was placed on a scaffold shrouded in black, and surrounded with numerous silver sconces bearing wax tapers, that shed a gloomy lustre over the scene.³¹ The services were performed amidst the deepest stillness of the audience, unless when broken by the wailings of the women, which mingled in sad harmony with the chant of the priests and the sweet and solemn music that accompanied the office for the dead.³²

²⁹ "Fue cosa increíble el doblar, y chamorear, por todas las parroquias, y monasterios, y hospitales. Lo cual causó un nuebo dolor y grandísimo aumento de tristeza, siendo ya algo tarde los grandes que en la corte se hallaban, y mayordomos de S. M. sacaron el cuerpo de la Reyna, y binieron con el a la Capilla Real." *Ibid.*

³⁰ "Jamais on ne vit peuple si desolé ny si affligé, ni tant jeter de hauts cris, ny tant espandre de larmes qu'il fit. . . . Que, pour maniere de parler, vous eussiez dit qu'il l'idolatroit plustost qu'il ne

l'honoroit et reveroit." Brantôme, *Œuvres*, tom. v. p. 131.

³¹ "Puesto el cuerpo por este orden cubierto con un muy rico paño de brocado rodeado el cadalso de muchas achas en sus muy sumtuosos blandones de plata." Juan Lopez, *Relacion de la Enfermedad de la Reyna Ysabel*, ubi supra.

³² "Las damas en las tribunas de donde oye misa con hartos suspiros y sollozos llebaban el contrapunto á la suave, triste y contemplativa musica, conque empezaron el oficio la capilla de S. M." *Ibid.*, ubi supra.

Early on the following morning the coffin was opened in presence of the duchess of Alva and the weeping ladies of her train, who gazed for the last time on features still beautiful in death.³³ The duchess then filled the coffin with flowers and sweet-scented herbs; and the remains of mother and child were transported by the same sorrowing company to the convent of the barefooted Carmelites. Here they reposed till the year 1573, when they were borne, with the remains of Carlos, to the stately mausoleum of the Escorial; and the populace, as they gazed on the funeral train, invoked the name of Isabella as that of a saint.³⁴

In the course of the winter, Cardinal Guise arrived from France with letters of condolence from Charles the Ninth to his royal brother-in-law. The instructions to the cardinal do not infer any distrust, on the part of the French monarch, as to the manner of his sister's death. The more suspicious temper of the queen-mother, Catherine de Medicis, is seen in her directions to Fourquevaulx to find out what was said on the subject of her daughter's death, and to report it to her.³⁵—It does not seem that the ambassador gathered any information of consequence, to add to his former details.

Philip himself may have had in his mind the possible

³³ "Las cuales viendo apartar el cuerpo, dieron muchos gritos, y suspiros y abriendole la duquesa de Alba, trajo muchos polvos de olores aromaticos de grande olor y fragancia, y embalsamon a la Reyna: la cual aunque habia pasado tanto tiempo estaba como si entonces acabara de morir, y con tan gran

hermosura en el rostro que no parecia esta muerta." Ibid., ubi supra.

³⁴ Letter of St. Goar, June 18. 1573, ap. Raumer, Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, vol. i. p. 163.—Quintana, Historia de Madrid, fol. 370.

³⁵ Letter of Catherine de Medicis, ap. Raumer, vol. i. p. 162.

existence of such suspicions, when he told the cardinal that "his best consolation for his loss was derived from his reflection on the simple and excellent life of the queen. All her attendants, her ladies and maids, knew how well he had treated her, as was sufficiently proved by the extraordinary sorrow which he felt at her death. Hereupon," continues the cardinal, "he broke forth into a panegyric on her virtues, and said, were he to choose again, he could wish nothing better than to find just such another."³⁶ — It was not long before Philip made the attempt. In eighteen months from the date of his conversation with the cardinal, the thrice-widowed husband led to the altar his fourth and last wife, Anne of Austria, — like her predecessor, as we have seen, the destined bride of his son. The facility with which her imperial parents trusted the young princess to the protection of Philip may be thought to intimate pretty clearly that they, at least, had no misgivings as to the king's treatment of his former wife.

Isabella, at her decease, was but twenty-three years of age, eight of which she had been seated on the throne of Spain. She left two children, both daughters; — Catherine, afterwards married to the duke of Savoy; and Clara Eugenia, who became with her husband, the Archduke Albert, joint ruler of the Netherlands, and who seems to have enjoyed a greater share of both the love and the confidence of Philip, than he ever vouchsafed to any other being.

Such is the story of Queen Isabella, stripped of the

³⁶ Letter of Cardinal Guise, Feb. 6. 1569, ap. *Ibid.*, 163.

coloring of romance, for which, in truth, it has been quite as much indebted to the pen of the historian as to that of the poet. From the whole account, it appears, that, if Carlos, at any time, indulged a criminal passion for his step-mother, such a passion was never requited or encouraged by Isabella, who seems to have felt for him only the sentiments that were justified by their connection, and by the appeal which his misfortunes made to her sympathy. Notwithstanding some feelings of resentment, not unnatural, when, in the words of Brantôme, "he had been defrauded of so fair a prize," there is yet little evidence that the prince's passion for her rose higher than the sentiments of love and gratitude which her kindness might well have awakened in an affectionate nature.³⁷ And that such, with all his errors, was the nature of Carlos, is shown, among other examples, by his steady attachment to Don John of Austria, his uncle, and by his devotion to his early preceptor, the bishop of Osma.

There is no proof that Philip was, at any time, displeased with the conduct of his queen, or that he regarded his son in the light of a rival. Least of all is there anything in the history of the time to show that he sacrificed his wife to his jealousy.³⁸ The contrary

³⁷ The openness with which Carlos avowed his sentiments for Isabella may be thought some proof of their innocence. Catherine de Medicis, in a letter to Fourquevaux, dated February 23. 1568, says, alluding to the prince's arrest: "I am concerned that the event very much distresses my daughter, as well with regard to her husband as in respect of the prince,

who has always let her know the good-will he bears to her." *Ibid.*, p. 141.

³⁸ The French historian, De Thou, by no means disposed to pass too favorable a judgment on the actions of Philip, and who in the present case would certainly not be likely to show him any particular grace, rejects without hesitation the suspicion of foul play on

is well established by those of her own countrymen who had free access to her during her lifetime, — some of them in the hour of her death, — whose correspondence with her family would not have failed to intimate their suspicions, had there been anything to suspect.

Well would it be for the memory of Philip the Second, could the historian find no heavier sin to lay to his charge than his treatment of Isabella. From first to last, he seems to have regarded her with the indulgence of an affectionate husband. Whether she ever obtained such an ascendancy over his close and cautious nature as to be allowed to share in his confidence and his counsels, may well be doubted. Her temper would seem to have been too gentle, too devoid of worldly ambition, to prompt her to meddle with affairs for which she was fitted neither by nature nor education. Yet Brantôme assures us, that she exercised a most salutary influence over her lord in his relations with France, and that the value of this influence was appreciated in later times, when the growing misunderstandings between the two courts were left to rankle, without any friendly hand to heal them.⁸⁹ “Her death,” he continues, “was as bitter

the part of the king. “Quelques-uns soupçonnerent Philippe de l’avoir fait empoisonner, parce qu’il lui avoit fait un crime de la trop grande familiarité qu’elle avoit avec Dom Carlos. Il est néanmoins facile de se convaincre du contraire, par la grande et sincère douleur que sa mort causa, tant à la Cour que dans toute l’Espagne; le Roi la pleura, comme une femme qu’il aimoit très-tendrement.” *Histoire Universelle*, tom. v. p. 437.

⁸⁹ Brantôme, *Œuvres*, tom. v. p. 137.

Yet Isabella’s mother, Catherine de Medicis, found fault with her daughter, in the interview at Bayonne, for having become altogether a Spaniard, saying to her tauntingly, “*Muy Española venis.*” To which the queen meekly replied, “It is possible that it may be so; but you will still find me the same daughter to you as when you sent me to Spain.” The anecdote is told by Alva in a letter to the king. *Carta del Duque de Alva al Rey*, MS.

to her own nation as it was to the Spaniards; and if the latter called her 'the Queen of Peace and Goodness,' the former with no less reason styled her 'the Olive-branch.'"⁴⁰ "But she has passed away," he exclaims, "in the sweet and pleasant April of her age, — when her beauty was such that it seemed as if it might almost defy the assaults of time."⁴¹

The queen occupies an important place in that rich gallery of portraits in which Brantôme has endeavored to perpetuate the features of his contemporaries. In no one of them has he traced the lineaments with a more tender and delicate hand. Even the breath of scandal has had no power to dim the purity of their expression. Of all that illustrious company which the artist has brought in review before the eyes of posterity, there is no one to whom he has so truly rendered the homage of the heart, as to Elizabeth of France.

But from these scenes of domestic sorrow, it is time that we should turn to others of a more stirring and adventurous character.

⁴⁰ "Aussi l'appelloit-on *la Reyna de le paz y de la bondad*, c'est-à-dire la Reyne de la paix et de la bonté; et nos François l'appellarent l'olive de paix." Ibid., p. 129.

⁴¹ "Elle est morte au plus beau

et plaisant avril de son aage.
Car elle estoit ne naturel et de tainct pour durer longtems belle, et aussi que la vieillesse ne l'eust osé attaquer, car sa beauté fut esté plus forte." Ibid., p. 137.



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