

cella) that you would not trust these young ones out, for fear they should never come back. Well—I am sure, they all look as merry as Olive herself. May I come and walk in the garden with you, Signora, whenever I like !’

“ ‘You don’t know what you are talking about, my darling’, said old Marcella ;—‘we should soon have a visit from my lord Abbot, just to ask what was the matter with us, if that were granted, I take it.—No, no, my man, you must run about outside the walls, when you want exercise. We don’t want to make a nun of you, you know—but for the garden—no.’

“ Morgante looked at the novices, and they all laughed.

“ ‘Away with you, my man, said Marcella’ giving him a gentle push,—‘away with you, I say ; your eyes are older than your stature. I must have no looking and laughing among my young ladies here. Come along, master Page, come along.’

“ ‘May I not speak one word to my lady mistress?’ said Morgante.

“ ‘Well then, make haste—speak away; and have done.’

“ ‘Are you happy, Signora?’ said the boy in a low whisper ; but Juliet discreetly answered him aloud.

“ ‘Yes, Morgante, very happy. And pray how do you like the convent ? I hope you are very well behaved and orderly?’

“ ‘Why, as for my liking the convent, Signora, I shall find no fault with it, provided we do not stay too long—and, as for my behaviour, I suppose it is as it should be, because more old ladies than I ever saw in my life before, have done nothing but pat my head, and call me dear and darling, ever since I arrived.’

“ The novices again laughed aloud at this sally.

“ ‘Come along, you little imp you,’ said the mother, seizing him by the shoulder, ‘they shall none of them call you so again, I promise ye.’

“ The boy could not resist his inclination to laugh, though it appeared as if Marcella shook him not very gently as she led him away.