

struggling with himself to master his love and summon up enough resolution that would carry him far, far away from the object of his affection. In his wandering he chanced upon a chemist's shop. Instinctively he entered; for here, he thought, could be bought an easy end to his wrongful love and the terrible sufferings entailed by it. A few minutes later he rushed out bearing a phial of poison with which he meant to take his life. His resolve, however, was feebler than his love. The thought of abandoning this world without bidding one last farewell to Francesca was unendurable. Almost unconsciously he drifted, so to speak, nearer and nearer the palace, until suddenly he collected his wandering powers of resolution and boldly entered the garden, where he found the object of his love. At the end of several hours, it seemed seconds, they took of one another what was meant to be the last good-bye, and Paolo again departed.

When the report of this secret visit reached the ears of Giovanni, he was surprised in no small degree; for by a strange coincidence he was concealed in the chemist's shop when the poison was purchased by Paolo, and had heard him confess to the owner of the shop his reasons for suicide. So this reported visit, as we have just said, was no small surprise. But, surmising that the many pleasant memories of the visit, and that a suitable opportunity for another, would blot out of Paolo's mind the death-sentence passed against himself, he feigned a journey to a distant state, hid in the palace, and awaited events. His surmise was correct. Paolo's resolution vanished utterly. He again sought to see Francesca. At first she stoutly refused to admit him to her presence; but finally, her refusals growing weaker and weaker, overcome by his pathetic entreaties and her own love for him, consented to see him once more. At this moment Giovanni emerged from concealment, and slew them both wrapped in each other's arms. So loving and beautiful did they look in death, that even their slayer was moved to utter tenderly these words:—

"Unwillingly  
They loved, unwillingly I slew them. Now  
I kiss them on the forehead quietly.

. . . . .  
They looked like children fast asleep.