

writing left behind abundantly proved. A turn in the pathway brought him suddenly in view of the gay scene he was in quest of. A circular space was railed off by a low gallery beneath awnings that fluttered in the wind, where a number of young and richly dressed ladies were seated. A few gallants were among them; but the greater number of these were outside the gallery, some leaning on the railings, others seated on the grass at the feet of some ladye-love perchance—with their jewelled caps, it might be, flung beside them on the sward, as they talked—and long love locks floating on the breeze. The large open space of green turf, in the centre, was overshadowed by the boughs of two enormous oak trees, that shed a delightful coolness over the whole assembly. But the main attraction of every regard, was the blue silk pavillion, surmounted by the white falcon of the Colonnas, beneath which the lady of the festival was seated. Of a marvellous and intellectual cast of beauty was she, as beneath her small pointed coronet and white veil, falling down on either side of her face, she looked a very Queen of the Graces. The eyes were dark, but expressive of greater ardour than softness. The nose was slightly Roman, and the hair raven black—in short, a cast of beauty more to be admired than loved, more calculated to dazzle than to soften. She appeared to be about twenty-six or twenty-seven years of age, or at a second glance she puzzled one by seeming to be much younger, her countenance exhibiting such a strange blending of the radiance and roundness of youth, joined to the thought and sagacity of maturer years; yet no second glance was necessary to convince Milton that it was not the face that he sought.

The princess was talking to one of her ladies, doubtless in discussion of the merits of the last singer, a young man in a gay green dress, who had just resumed his seat among the ladies; but there was another marvellous figure immediately behind her, that now attracted Milton's regards. Much younger, and with more simplicity of appearance than the princess, she was yet a perilous rival in whose close vicinity to stand. It was like a Hebe beside a Juno, so fair and fragile did she seem beside the imperious beauty of the other. It was not so much the loveliness of the face that attracted his attention, as a certain expression which was so ethereal, so celestial, that it appeared to the poet's excited imagination, like that of one who is early marked out for the spirit land. "Such have I heard," thought he within himself, "noted as pertaining to those who are to die young, as if the beauty of immortality were already stamped upon them, and they are being fashioned for the destiny

of some brighter sphere. Is this," thought he, "the regard we dream of, as pertaining to those who with forms immortal and gloried, are risen from the dust of the grave to enter upon the undying life of the new heaven and the new earth? Surely not less spiritual, not less pure than the lineaments of that lovely face!"

He stood looking intently upon her, and she caught his eye, returning for a moment his gaze. There was that old sweet look he had seen in his dream,—the very look which he could not be persuaded was unfamiliar to him,—so much kindness and recognition were there in the eyes which now, as before, seemed those of no stranger, but as of one that he had known and loved long ago. It was the very same face, attire and attitude—all the same. Long brown curls, confined with a silver band, a robe of white, with blue scarf, which was the costume of the attendant of the princess; and the lyre across her shoulder, as she sat a little behind her mistress in the capacity of her lute bearer, told Milton that it was no other than the late apparition of his dream. He felt his face colour as he still continued to gaze upon the young girl, realizing more strongly her identity; but though she evidently perceived him, she gave no evidence of recognition. The princess beckoned her to her side.

"It is your turn, carissima," said she to her. "I have been half dying to hear your sweet voice all day, Giuletta mine."

She was evidently a great favorite; for the princess took hold of her curls lovingly, and seemed to treat her as a favoured child.

"If you will let me escape to-day, dear princess, my breath comes short, and my voice has no force; besides my brain is as dull of bright thoughts as that of Carlo, your pantaloon."

"Ah! the old tale; you are getting lazy, *poverina*, and that is all thy short breathing and thy weak voice. Only fancy," said she, turning to her ladies, "our Giuletta dreaming of decaying health. Ah! Giulia, rosy as the morning! what foolish fancies will not come into your poor little head!"

Still Giulia begged hard to be reprieved, and urged that she would throw discredit on her mistress, and that she could neither sing nor improvise to-day to do justice to the far famed accomplishments of the Colonna court. But Francesca was inexorable. "The old tale, still the old tale," repeated she; "how often hast thou not urged these excuses in former times, and in the end sung and recited to delight us all. Come, carissima, and I pledge thee my coronet, thou shalt yet win the golden violet. I see inspiration in thine eyes—