

# VIOLET KEITH.

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## CHAPTER I.

WE stood alone, my brother Willie and I, by the bed from which the body of our dead mother had been removed only a few hours before. Long years have passed since then, but every object in that large cold room seems as distinct as if I had never quitted it; the lofty bed with its long white curtains, the large windows draped in white, the crimson carpet, the dressing table with its service of white and gold; the large mirror, above which was suspended an old-fashioned woodcut of "the Pilgrim's Progress," on which Willie and I used to delight to trace the wanderings of Pilgrim, with eye and finger alike busy following him in his flight from the city of destruction to his entrance into the golden gate; and more vivid than aught else, is that long red mark on the white sheet, made by the pressure of the coffin, that indelible mark which time has never been able to efface from my mind.

As we looked, our tears fell fast; it was the last trace of the dear mother, who, a few evenings before, smiled upon us and spoke so kindly, when we came to kiss her before going to bed. How well we remembered and how eagerly we repeated each word and look of that evening now. Ah! could we but once more feel the touch of that, then, white hand,