

tection he ever trusted, knowing that the goodness of the Creator is over all his works.

What a diversified scene did that death-bed present! The bed itself, the damp, cold ground, with no covering but the wide spread arch of heaven, and the mingled shade of noble oaks: the victim, one of poverty's lowliest children: the attending friends, four wretched, ragged children: the spectators, a nation's nobles, while royalty itself bent over the dying, and besought a happy exit for the departing soul.

Need we say, that the remains received honorable burial? Need we say that they were followed to their last low resting place by a goodly throng? and need we say that the promise made by the monarch to that dying mother, was faithfully performed? A few days after the funeral of the mother, the children were placed in a respectable school in the fair town of Windsor, and all things requisite for their comfort duly provided. But only a few weeks passed, ere the fair pale boy went down to an early tomb, the victim of a rapid decline, engendered by the fearful exposure to storm and cold, to which he had been long subjected; and before another autumn had passed away, another mound arose beside the two already there, marking the last home of the youngest of the lonely orphans. Two only now remained; and their royal protector mourned the loss of his forest blossoms, as he ever termed them, with real sorrow.

CHAPTER II.

MORE than a year had passed since the death of the mother of the orphans: once more the autumn had touched the verdant forest with its chilling breath, and its glory had assumed a russet hue; no longer the bright sweet flowers sprang forth to beautify the landscape, and fill the air with fragrance. It was near the close of one of October's richest days, when two young men, whose bearing proclaimed them nobly descended, left the royal palace of Windsor, and sauntered listlessly along, until they reached the fine old church, a noble Gothic edifice, which told of bygone days, and its wide spread yard, which marked the abode of the departed. For a moment they paused, and then, with a hesitating step, entered the enclosure. The one was apparently some years older than his companion; his form noble, dignified, and commanding; his face, though not so handsome as that of his friend, wore a gentle smile, which diffused over it an expression, which found its way at once to the heart. The other was somewhat the smaller of the two, and few could boast more symmetry of

form, or beauty of face. They walked for some time with gentle steps, over the mouldering ashes of the dead. Suddenly they paused beside three humble mounds, on each of which a leafless rose-tree now waved gently in the evening breeze, while a few pale violets hung their drooping heads, as frail memorials placed by the hand of affection upon the grave of a beloved one, gone down into its silent chamber.

"Do you know, Lord Frederick," asked the elder of the two, "who rests beneath these humble hillocks?"

"No, I do not," answered his lordship; "I only know 'tis those whose memory is cherished by surviving friends,—oh! how I love such symbols of the heart's affection; to me the blushing rose and drooping violet, are dearer, far dearer, testimonies of remembrance, than the noble monument, which seems to say, Pride inspired affection to rear me."

"Here rests that wretched pauper, whose death scene we witnessed in yonder forest, and here beside her, repose two of the lovely orphans, whom my gracious father took under his own especial protection." He was about proceeding in his narrative, when his young friend grasped his arm convulsively, and with a face on which was depicted deep and agonizing emotion, exclaimed—"Not the eldest!—that beautiful girl!—no! she was far too beautiful to die!"

The prince looked at him for a moment in amazement, and then said with provoking composure—

"Nonsense; know ye not that death delights to cull the fairest blossoms? But come," he added, as he drew the arm of his companion through his,—"we may be thought by yonder sable figures, intruders on sacred ground;" and he directed the attention of the young lord to two young girls clad in the garb of mourning, who were slowly approaching.

A few steps brought them to a place where, screened by the shade of a clump of small trees, they might, without fear of detection, observe the new comers, and it was with deep emotion Lord Frederick saw them approach, with slow and hesitating steps, the humble spot which they but a moment before had left. The elder of the two had nearly completed her fourteenth year, and the young nobleman thought as he again looked on that sylph-like form, and lovely face, that every hour had added new beauty to a being he had thought possessed of more than earthly loveliness. The younger had passed her twelfth birth day, and though far less beautiful than her sister, she was one, who being once seen, would not be soon forgotten. The calm of heaven rested on each fair feature, a pensive sweetness diffused