

The Death of a Young Girl.

While travelling for my health from place to place among those rural retreats in which our country abounds, I rested for the night in a pretty village which seemed to me disturbed by some unusual event. The intense interest centred apparently in a little cottage which stood back from the road, almost hidden from view by the luxuriance of the shrubbery surrounding it. On enquiring of my hostess, I learnt that a lovely child, the only one remaining of a large family, had been stricken down by the unseen hand of death, and her body now lay in her former home, awaiting its burial.

Moved by a natural impulse, and a desire to gaze upon the face of one whose praises filled the air so lately echoing with her merry laugh, I joined the throng of lowly villagers, old and young, who entered the cottage to take a last look at the face of their beloved friend. It was indeed a beautiful spot, fitted rather for the abode of angels than that of the fell destroyer. But who shall say that the soul which so lately tenanted this clay was not guarded by ministering spirits in its upward flight? An oppressive silence pervaded the chamber of death, and on a couch at one end of the room lay the body of little Nell. Beautiful in life, her beauty seemed only to have been enhanced by death,—a casual observer would have thought it sleep. The semblance of sleep was on earth, the awakening in Heaven. I could almost fancy that what lay before me in such exquisite loveliness, was a form fresh from the hand of the Divine Creator, and waiting for the breath of life, rather than a body from which that breath had forever fled.

Her couch was adorned with winterberries and leaves, plucked by the hand of affection from those sheltered spots in the green woods where she had loved to wander. While slowly passing away from earth she had expressed a feeble wish for something on which the light of Heaven had shone, and this wish was almost anticipated by little playmates eager to pay their last tribute of affection. She drew her last breath with these flowers clasped in her wasted hands.

The silence of the room was only broken by the fluttering movements of Nellie's pet bird, which flew uneasily from side to side of its little cage, as if it realized the loss it had sustained in the death of its little mistress.

I could not but draw a contrast between the dead child and the living bird; the one when in life, so noble and with a heart