

# IN MUSIC'S THRALL.

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## CHAPTER I.

### "PALLIDA MORS."

A COUNTRY school-house lies before us in all its chill bareness, uninviting, unpretentious, and suggestive of all that is unattractive to the youthful learners and the most enthusiastic teachers. A stony waste, unproductive of tree or shrub, surrounds the building, except at one side, where a few weeds and some herbage struggle for existence. A half-finished fence skirts the west boundary—the uneven supports defying any appearance of beauty or symmetry; while the lack of trees in the front is supplied by one struggling hop vine, which, rearing its head, sinks down again unfruitful, abashed at its own daring.

A little creek, at times, runs babbling along beside the unsightly fence, as though nature had by this one gift tried to atone for neglect