

CHAPTER XVI.

RIDOLFO GHIRLANDAIO.

On the 11th of January 1494, intelligence was given to the officers of his quarter at Florence that, early in the morning, Domenico Ghirlandaio had died of pestilential fever, after four days illness. The consternation caused by this announcement was so great that the family was not allowed to perform the ceremony of burial in daylight; and the corpse was taken at midnight by the brethren of the company of S. Paolo to the house vault in S. Maria Novella.¹

Florence lamented the untimely death of its greatest painter in the ripeness of his talent. The real mourners on this melancholy occasion were, the widow, Antonia, the brothers, Benedetto, and David, and six children; of whom three were sons.² In little less than four years, Antonia and Benedetto followed Domenico to the grave, leaving David guardian of the children.³ Of these, the daughters had the good fortune to marry men of respectable condition; two sons, Antonio and Bartolommeo entered

¹ Since the first volumes of this history were published, the registry of Domenico Ghirlandaio's death and burial have been published in Tav. Alfab. ub. sup.

² See the genealogical table in Vas. V. 88. 9.

³ The death of Benedetto took

place on the 17th of July 1497. There must be an error, therefore, in Gaye's record (I. 267. Carteggio) in which it is said that Benedetto becomes guardian in "loco patris" of Domenico's children, anno 1498. Perhaps 1493 would be the proper date. The year of his birth is 1458 (Tav. Alfab.)