

remembered him as a former play fellow and generous school companion.

A few days before she died, as Helen sat by her bedside, administering to her wants, she put forth her emaciated and withered hands, and, taking Helen's, kissed them, and blessed her for the care and attention she had paid her. Pointing to a small chest in which her clothes were kept, she gave Helen the key, and requested her to open it and bring a small ebony box to her. Helen did as desired; and, when she received the box she opened it by touching a concealed spring, Helen looked on in amazement; for in the box were many jewels, and several valuable rings. The old woman took them out, one by one, and laid them upon the bed, in a careless manner, as if they had been of no value; then took out a small bundle of letters, which she kissed and wept over for a few moments; then looking up, she said—

"O Great Author of my being! pardon this, my last thought of earth, when my whole soul ought to be employed in thanking Thee for Thy mercies, and imploring pardon for my many sins. Oh, how I now lament my infirmities!—but there is still hope for even the chief of sinners, which I am, in the blood of Jesus." She then sunk overpowered upon her pillow for a time, and at length recovering, continued—"Dear Helen, when I am gone keep these baubles to yourself. Alas! they were purchased by me by years of misery. These papers you will keep for William, should he ever return to inquire after me; if not, destroy them; you are at liberty to look over them if you choose, when I am no more. In this box you will also find a small sum in gold. When it pleases God to give his sinful creatures more favourable seasons, it will restock this present desolate farm, and in part only restore the debt of gratitude we owe a worthy man."

Helen, with tears, accepted the bequest, and restored it to the oaken chest; then knelt by the bedside of the sufferer, and prayed with all her heart for her recovery; but the hand of death was upon Elizabeth—she fell into stupor, and never spoke again. Helen and her foster parents felt real sorrow at the death of their inmate, for she was a pleasant companion to a pious auditory.—Though taciturn on every subject but what was of a spiritual nature, her soul became as if on fire when she conversed on her

favourite theme, and a sublimity was in her language that carried away her hearers, and forced conviction upon the cold and indifferent.

As soon as the funeral was over, Helen showed to William and his wife the magnificent bequest of the old lady. Although they knew not the exact value of the gems, they knew it must be considerable; and the guineas were above two hundred. Their astonishment was great at the good fortune of Helen; for they had always thought, from her dress and humility, that Elizabeth was poor, although she never sought relief, but lived principally upon the produce of her little kail yard, and the meal she purchased each year, in the beginning of winter, along with her meat. This unexpected wealth added not to their happiness, nor in the least abated their grief for the loss of the giver.—Scanty as the necessaries of life were, William Kerr was far from poor; but, at this time, money could not procure food in many of the distant parts of Scotland.

By strict economy they contrived to get over the next long and dismal winter, and even to have something to spare for the more necessitous of their neighbours, in hopes that the ensuing spring would put an end to their privations; but it proved cold and barren as the others had been, and the more necessitous of the surviving population had retired to the sea-shore, to eke out a scanty subsistence by picking the shell-fish from the rocks, and eating the softer sea-weeds. Often in vain the most dexterous fisher essayed his skill, and returned without a single fish; for even those had forsaken the shores of the famishing land, driven off by the storms, and the swell and surge, that for weeks together beat upon the coast. In this the extreme of their distress, William Kerr heard that a vessel had arrived at Stranraer with grain. Without delay he mounted his sole remaining horse, now so much reduced that it could scarce bear his weight, and set off for the port—a distance of twenty miles. Short as it was, it was late in the evening ere he arrived, and he found, to his regret, that all had been disposed of in a few hours—being dispersed about the town and immediate neighbourhood. Through much importunity and by paying a great price, he procured a scanty supply; and next morning laying