

in truth, after his first lesson, Ebenezer was master of these two letters. And, afterwards, when the teacher in trying him promiscuously through the alphabet, would inquire—"What letter is this?" "I no ken," the cripple would reply, "but I'm sure its no O, and it's no S." Within a week he was master of the six-and-twenty mystical symbols, with the exception of four—and those four were *b* and *d*, *p* and *q*. Ebenezer could not for three months be brought to distinguish the *b* from the *d*, nor the *p* from the *q*; but he had never even heard that he had a right hand and a left until he came to the school—and how could it be expected?

Scarce, however, had he mastered the alphabet, until the faculties of the deformed began to expand. He now both understood and felt what it was to learn. He passed from class to class with a rapidity that astonished his teacher. He could not join in the boisterous sports of his schoolfellows, and while they were engaged in their pastime, he sought solitude, and his task accompanied him. He possessed strong natural talents, and his infirmities gave them the assistance of industry. His teacher noted these things in the cripple, and he was gratified with them, but he hesitated to express his feelings openly, lest the charge of partiality should be brought against him. Ebenezer, however, had entered the academy as the butt of his schoolfellows—they mocked, they mimicked, they tormented, they despised, or affected to despise him; and his talents and progress, instead of abating their persecutions, augmented them. His teacher was afraid to shew him more kindness than he shewed to others; and his schoolfellows gloried in annoying the cripple—they persecuted, they shunned, they hated him more than even his mother did. He began to hate the world, for he had found none that would love him. His teacher was the only human being that had ever whispered to him words of praise or of kindness, and that had always been in cold, guarded, and measured terms.

Before he was eighteen he had acquired all the knowledge that his teacher could impart, and he returned to the cottage among the mountains. There, however, he was again subjected to a persecution more barbarous than that which he had met with from his schoolfellows. Mrs. Baird mocked, insulted, and drove him from her presence; and her domestic shewed him neither kindness nor respect. In stature, he scarcely exceed-

ed five feet; and his body was feeble as well as deformed. The cruelty with which he had been treated had given an asperity to his temper, and made him almost a hater of the human race; and these feelings had lent their character to his countenance, marking its naturally harsh expression with suspicion and melancholy.

He was about five-and-twenty when the pangs and the terrors of death fell upon her whom he regarded as his parent. She died, as a sinner dies—with insulted eternity frowning to receive her. A few minutes before her death she desired the cripple to approach her bedside. She fixed her closing eyes, which affection had never lighted, upon his. She informed him that he was not her son.

"Oh, tell me then, whose son am I? Who are my parents?" he exclaimed eagerly—"speak! speak!"

"Your parents!" she muttered, and remorse and ignorance held her departing soul in their grasp. She struggled, she again continued—"Your parents—no, Ebenezer! no!—I dare not name them. I have sworn!—and a deathbed is no time to break an oath!"

"Speak! Speak!—tell me as you hope for heaven!" cried the cripple, with his thin bony fingers grasping the wrists of the dying woman.

"Monster! monster!" she screamed wildly and intently "leave me! leave me!—you are provided for—open that chest—the chest!—the chest!"

Ebenezer loosed his grasp—he sprang towards a strong chest which stood in the room. "The keys! the keys!" he exclaimed wildly, and again hurrying to the bed, he violently pulled a bunch of keys from beneath her pillow. But while he applied them to the chest, the herald of death rattled in the throat of its victim; and, with one agonizing throe and a deep groan, her spirit escaped and her body lay a corpse upon the bed.

He opened the chest and in it he found securities, which settled upon him, under the name of Ebenezer Baird, five thousand pounds. But there was nothing which threw light on his parentage, nothing to inform him who he was, or why he was there.

The body of her who had never shed a tear over him, he accompanied to the grave. But now a deeper gloom fell upon him. He met but few men, and the few he met shunned him, for there was wildness and a bitterness in his words—a railing against the world