

THE INSTRUCTOR.

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LITERARY DEPARTMENT.

THE REWARD.

IN THREE CHAPTERS.

CHAP. I.

“But, Maria, we are not all possessed of as many attractions as you are; so you need not be surprized that we think a really good offer is not to be trifled with. However, don't be too confident of marrying who & when you please, for Henry Trask seems quite in danger from that little Miss Prentiss, who is taking such a desirable place among the belles—you may lose him after all.”

“Really, Sarah, you talk as though Henry Trask were a declared and accepted suitor; he is no lover of mine. I assure you;—Miss Prentiss is welcome to his heart and hand.”

“Nonsense! just as though all the world could not see how you regard each other, what if you have not plighted mutual truth? Eyes will tell tales which the tongue has not revealed. But I must go—good morning.”

The giddy girl withdrew, having undesignedly planted a thorn in the heart of the haughty Maria Everett. Left to her own reflections, the latter began to take a survey of facts—it was even so; Henry was devoting too much attention to Ellen Prentiss. And who was she! An obscure girl, wholly unconnected in the world—probably of disgraceful origin. Should she win the heart of one of whom herself had been proud as an admirer? No—that girl should sink to the degradation from which she had been raised.

Unfortunately for Maria, she was under the influence of an unprincipled, designing woman, who had been her governess, and was now her confidant. To her she communicated this new vexation, and besought her aid.

“Never mind,” said the woman, “it is well known the girl was picked up among the poorest classes, and it is very easy to make people think she belongs where she was found. You shall not be troubled long with her.”

And who was Ellen Prentiss, upon whose head such vengeance was to fall? She was—but I began with the middle of my story; let me go back a little.

It matters little what station in society was originally occupied by the family of which William Murray was a younger member, nor in what circle the affectionate and accomplished Ellen Hermon might have claimed a place. All that need be known is that, through a series of misfortunes which had befallen his family, William found himself, on entering manhood, possessed of little more than an unsullied reputation, correct moral principles, and every desirable mental endowment and acquisition, and that Ellen was in no degree inclined to withhold her hand from one to whom she had already given a heart of which he knew the value, though his once happy prospects were now wholly blasted. They were married. England had been their home, and England they loved still; but as the contest, during which America had achieved her independence, was now closed, and many inducements to emigrate were presented within her widely extended and fertile territory, they had resolved on making it their future abode; and not many months from the period of their union they were located in New York. Here Murray commenced a retired mode of life, expecting, by self-denial and industry, rather than any uncertain speculation, eventually to secure a competency. Unconnected with the gay and fashionable world, rich in the possession of his own dear Ellen, his happiness seemed likely to be as permanent as it was pure and tranquil. Two or three years had thus passed away when he was summoned to England, to settle an estate which had unexpectedly fallen to him by the will of a deceased relative. Both himself and his wife well knew that even a temporary separation would be to them a most unwelcome event; still, being satisfied of its expediency, they acquiesced, with the hope of soon dwelling together again in improved circumstances. But when