

LITERARY DEPARTMENT.

THE REWARD.

CHAP. III.

Mrs. Trask, from that moment, forgot his treatment of herself, dwelling only upon his past affection, and accusing herself as the cause of his ruin. She was left in a wretched condition, pennyless, helpless, without friends, a prey to the most agonizing reflections. A gentleman, who had lost his wife several years previous, and had lodgings in the neighbourhood, on learning from his landlady something of her history, and that she would like a private residence in the country, offered to furnish the means for her removal, and comfortable subsistence one year, delicately prohibiting the least intimation which would betray the donor. The money was conveyed to the wretched woman through the landlady, and, in a short time, Mrs. Trask's place of residence was known only to a few, including the parson through whom she received the charity which had enabled her to leave New York. On settling herself at B—, her natural haughtiness of spirit, not yet conquered, induced her to desire effectual concealment from all former acquaintance, and she assumed the name of Lincoln, by which she must at present be designated. She here cherished a state of feeling which was fast paralyzing every mental and bodily energy. Her wasted form, haggard features, and agonized expression of countenance, bore alarming testimony to the corroding effects of grief, disappointment, and remorse, as in her case unmitigated by hope, unaccompanied even by the excitement which suspense creates, and aggravated by entire seclusion from society. In this seclusion, however, were raised up for her friends more valuable than those she had lost.

Mr Horton, the clergyman of B—, adorned his high and holy calling by a life of uniform piety and active benevolence. In his indefatigable exertions to discharge the sacred duties of his office, he was greatly aided by the congenial spirit and labours of his wife, who considered it her peculiar province to cheer and assist the distressed, and to acquaint her husband with any new opening for usefulness which might invite his attention. She was not long in learning enough of Mrs.

that she had a claim upon their sympathy, and immediately obtained Mr. Horton's assent to a joint call upon the stranger. Their reception was not very encouraging. Mrs. Lincoln maintained a painful reserve in regard to her history, merely saying that she had experienced severe trials and reverses, and betrayed an embarrassment and uneasiness which, in one evidently accustomed to the world, could not easily be accounted for. But those messengers of mercy resolved to persevere in their endeavours to win her confidence, and administer balm to her wounded spirits. For, whether her evident wretchedness was caused by guilt or affliction, or both, she was one to whom they were commanded to exhibit the instructions and consolations of his holy religion, who came to seek and save that which was lost.

Repeated calls, made both separately and together, appeared to have awakened in the forlorn woman a feeling of tenderness and gratitude, yet the constraint in her manner was not overcome. Returning one afternoon from a walk, during which she had dropped in, to utter a word of kindness to the stranger, Mrs. Horton said to her husband—

“There is something in Mrs. Lincoln's appearance which I cannot account for; she seems as though my presence awakened unpleasant recollections; it is often painful to witness her confusion when I approach her.”

“Perhaps you resemble some friend she has lost,” replied Mr. Horton.

“It may be—and certainly I have often thought that her face is not a new one to me.”

At the succeeding interview she was received by Mrs. Lincoln with evident cordiality, but with increasing perturbation. Mrs. Horton was endeavouring, as usual, to soothe and profit the object of her benevolent visit, by presenting such topics as might be applicable to her case, whatever was the cause of her distress, when the unhappy woman, unable longer to restrain her feelings, convulsively exclaimed—

“Oh! madam, you know not that the wretched being to whom you offer consolation has inflicted upon you the most cruel injury. The name by which I am here known is assumed, —your attentions have been bestowed upon