

[From the Ladies' Companion.]

PAULINE ROSIER.

It was in the twilight of a cold November day, while a violent storm was raging as I hurried along the Rue De Grace, that I heard a feeble voice exclaim, "Charity! Charity!" I turned to the spot from whence the sound proceeded, and there, in the dark recess of an old building, sat a human figure shivering in rags. The singular situation, and the wretched appearance of the suppliant, caused me to pause. On a closer examination, I found it was a female crouched upon the damp and chilly ground; a tattered cloak was closely drawn around her person, but yet so scanty in its dimensions, as to suffer her arms to be exposed to the fury of the storm. Her neck and bosom were also partially uncovered, over which hung thick black masses of dishevelled hair. Her face was pale and haggard, while her eyes flashed with a wild and unearthly lustre. On perceiving me regarding her, she extended her right hand, and in a voice of melancholy sweetness, faintly again ejaculated—"Charity! Charity!" I dropped a piece of money in her palm—my heart filled with sorrow at her desolate and cheerless situation. "Poor woman," I exclaimed, "may God be with thee," and turning away, I was about to walk on.

With a strong convulsive effort, she sprang forward, seized my hand, pressed it to her lips, then falling on her knees, called a blessing on me. The suddenness of the act caused her cloak to fall to the ground, and reveal to view a tall, emaciated figure, in the veriest habiliments of poverty, while I particularly observed a miniature richly encased in gold, suspended from her neck by a faded black riband. Dim as was the light, I could, however, discover that it was the picture of a man—no doubt a treasured remembrance—a gift of happier times—a token of the affections that served

"To bring remembrance full before the view
Of the loved lineaments
Of those we ne'er must hope to meet again."

"Pray rise, my good woman," I said, "this is no place for sorrow; and I endeavoured to raise her, but my attention seemed only to increase her suffering; sobs deep and audible heaved her bosom, tears streamed in torrents from her eyes; she held my hand with a grasp like death—a strong hysterical laugh ensued, and she fell senseless before me.

My situation was a most singular and painful one—almost a stranger in Paris—an unknown female in sorrow and suffering lying stretched before me on the cold and stony ground—no one near to aid or advise, for such was the fury of the hour, that the streets were utterly deserted. To leave her exposed to the mercy of the elements—to the chance of recovery, or to the accidental meeting of some individual more able than myself to succor her, seemed an act of barbarity. A thousand ideas flashed through my mind with the rapidity of lightning, and I stood for some minutes the being of irresolution, but humanity whispered to my heart, "She is a woman." My determination was at once taken, and unclasping my cloak from my shoulders, I wrapped it around her stiff and senseless form, and replacing her in the recess in which I had first discovered her, hastened to the nearest dwelling, to solicit for her shelter and assistance.

It was with difficulty, however, that I could find one heart to lend a favourable ear to my story, all to whom I applied, appearing to regard my request as quixotic; for such is human nature, ever too prone to receive with suspicion the prayer of misery, and to attribute to the wretched sufferer, the cause of his own misfortunes. At length I encountered a feeling response in the person of a poor and humble woman, who listened with compassion to my story, and telling her husband, whose heart, thank God, was as alive to my tale of wretchedness as that of his honest partner, to accompany me; we returned to the spot where I had left the sufferer, and arrived in the very crisis of time, to rescue her from two gend'armes, who were dragging her along with brutal