

THE INSTRUCTOR.

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LITERARY DEPARTMENT.

A SCENE IN REAL LIFE.

CHAP. II.

At a late hour on one of those bitter cold evenings experienced in the early part of January, of the present year, two females, a mother and daughter, both wretchedly clad, stood shivering at the entrance of a cellar, in the lower part of the city, occupied by two persons of colour. The daughter appeared to be labouring under severe indisposition, and leaned for support on the arm of her mother, who, knocking at the door, craved shelter and warmth for the night. The door was half-opened in answer to the summons, but the black who appeared on the stairs, declared that it was out of his power to comply with the request, as he had neither fire, except that which was furnished by a handful of tan, or covering for himself and wife. The mother, however, too much inured to suffering to be easily rebuked, declared that herself and daughter were likely to perish from cold, and that even permission to rest on the floor of the cellar, where they would be protected, in some degree from the 'nipping and eager air,' would be a charity for which they would be for ever grateful. She alleged, as an excuse for the claim to shelter, that she had been ejected, a few minutes before, from a small room which with her daughter, she had occupied in a neighbouring ally, and for which she had stipulated to pay fifty cents per week, because she had found herself unable to meet the demand, every resource for obtaining money having been cut off by the severity of the season. The black, more generous than many who are more ambitious of a reputation of

benevolence, admitted the shivering applicants, and at once resigned, for their accommodation for the night, the only two seats in the cellar, and cast a fresh handful of tan upon the ashes in the fire place.

It was a scene of wretchedness, want, and misery, calculated to soften the hardest heart, and to enlist the feelings and sympathies of the most selfish. The regular tenants of the cellar were the coloured man and his wife, who gained a scanty and precarious subsistence as they were able, by casual employment in the streets, or in neighbouring houses. Having in summer made no provision for the inclemencies of winter, they were then utterly destitute. They had sold their articles of clothing and furniture, one by one, to provide themselves with bread, until all were disposed of, but two broken chairs, a box that served for a table, and a small piece of carpeting, which answered the double purpose of a bed and covering. Into this department of poverty were the mother and the daughter, lately ejected from a place destitute of the comforts of life, introduced. The former was a woman of about fifty years; but the deep furrows on her face, and her debilitated frame, betokened a more advanced age. Her face was wan and pale, and her haggard countenance and tattered dress indicated a full measure of wretchedness. Her daughter sat beside her, and rested her head on her mother's lap. She was about twenty-five years of age, and might once have been handsome; but a life of debauchery had thus early robbed her cheeks of their roses, and prostrated her constitution. The pallidness of disease was on her face, anguish was in her heart.

Hours passed on. In the gloom of midnight the girl awoke from a disturbed and unre-