

HER STORY.

BY FLORA MACDONALD.

She is a strikingly handsome woman ; to all appearances a devotee of fashion, society, theatres, etc. Upon closer observation I saw that she lived two lives, one for the world to see, and the other what she could not help but feel.

A sad expression would come over the proud, lovely face when she imagined herself unobserved ; it was painful to see, but directly she was addressed it vanished and a careless smile or rippling laugh took its place. When I knew her better I asked her for a sketch of her life, for mine had been more clouds than sunshine, and I would be very glad could my sympathy brighten hers. I will give her story in her own words :

"I was born in London, England. My mother was an Italian and played and sang in the streets, but further than that I know nothing about her, only that she was beautiful and good.

My father was an Englishman. He died when I was but three years old. At eight years of age I was left all alone in the world, with very little earthly goods. A small room in a tenement house contained all that belonged to my mother. A harp, violin, and small cottage piano were all there was of any value. She had taught me to speak Italian and I had learned English, selling newspapers in the streets. I could play by ear any of the instruments and sang, in Italian, many songs she had taught me.

My education was of course neglected and although I knew the English alphabet and many words from looking at the newspapers, I could not write my own name. I felt the loss of my mother very much and sold no papers nor went out of our own little room.

I had been thinking all the time, however, finally coming to the conclusion that no matter what hardships I

underwent I would not part with any of the things my mother had left me, and would still keep the room, though it cost a shilling a week.

It was very hard at first, sometimes I would only have a piece of bread or a bun all day, but I was happy at the end of the week did I manage to make up the shilling.

My favorite spot in summer was near the gates of one of the parks. I would fain have entered but only those with keys were admitted. Every fine afternoon through the summer many children came to play. Oh, how I envied their pretty clothes and dainty lunches their nurses had for them.

One little boy, perhaps nine or ten years old, always bought a paper from me, and took so much interest in me that through his influence I easily disposed of all my papers.

He sometimes gave me a picture book or school book, and I longed to read. I got the old woman from whom I rented my room to teach me and was delighted to find she was quite capable.

As soon as I could write legibly I wrote a letter to my young hero thanking him for his kindness. He wrote me in return saying he would do all he could for me and so we wrote little letters occasionally till he was fourteen, while I was twelve. What a manly handsome youth. He was very tall for his age. He seemed to me the embodiment of everything grand and noble.

How much I thought of him ; he was the hero of all my stories, the picture prince in all my air castles. Thanks to him and the pride I took in his friendship I was no longer ignorant, and in every way possible tried to improve myself. What a reward it was if he approved of what I did.