

Selections.

A STORY OF A WOMAN'S LIFE.

"Good morning, Mrs. Morton. I have run in a moment to inquire if a bit of news I have heard be true. It is too incredible for me to believe, for with all your practical ideas of life, I cannot think you would carry your peculiar notions to such a length as this."

"Pray, what have I been doing now, Mrs. Ellis?" said Mrs. Morton, as she quietly arose and offered her visitor a chair. "Your words and looks are ominous. Have I committed such a breach of propriety that Madam Grundy has found it necessary to hurl her thunders of excommunication against me? Come, silence my suspense quickly;" and with a pleasant smile the lady awaited her visitor's revelation.

"Why, I am told that you have actually apprenticed Belle to a publisher, in order that she may become a compositor. Every one was talking about it last evening at Mrs. Wilson's party, and all thought it a great pity that so beautiful and accomplished a girl as Isabel Morton should be withdrawn from that society she is so well fitted to adorn, and immured within the walls of a dingy, old publishing house, simply because her mother chooses to sacrifice her child to that Moloch of her's—work. As for me, I cannot think you are so blind to your only daughter's interests."

"Yes, it is true," said Mrs. Morton, glancing up from her work, for her fingers were ever busy with something.

"But I see nothing in this to create such a profound sensation. Belle is not lost to society; she will have many hours for recreation, and will thus be enabled to meet any responsible demands society may make upon her."

"No doubt she will. Is it possible, Mrs. Morton, you do not know that you are effectually banishing your daughter from society. For of course much as I deplore such a state of affairs, "our set" could never recognize an humble type-setter as one of themselves. This is all wrong I admit, but public opinion regulates these matters, and one must drift with the current, you know. Belle has just graduated with the highest honors, and with her lovely manners and fresh young face, might command the most eligible match in the city. It is absolutely cruel to sacrifice the sweet girl in this way!"

"Well, Mrs. Ellis, I take up the gauntlet society has thrown down, and I shall fearlessly

perform what I conceive to be my duty, though I am never again recognized by one of those whom I am accustomed to associate. Out upon these aristocratic notions about work, imported from lands where despotism grinds with its iron heel the laborer and his offspring. What business have Americans harboring such ideas? It is my aim to make Belle an independent, self-reliant woman. As to marriage, I am not at all concerned about that. The man who would scorn her hand because that hand is able to earn its fair possessor's support, I would scorn to receive into my family. It is my desire that she may grow up a noble, useful woman fitted to reign a very queen in the hearts of husband and children, should heaven bestow these priceless gifts upon her. At the same time I want her character to be so symmetrical that should she never meet one who appreciates her, she may cheerfully fill up this great void in her life by devoting herself to some noble pursuit. I think parents commit a grave error in not practically educating their daughters as well as their sons. In it, and not in legislation, may be found the solution to the vexed question that is now agitating our sex all over the land, and breaking out in discontented murmurings everywhere."

"O, it is all very well for people to work whose necessities requires it," said Mrs. Ellis, "but Belle is your only child, and will inherit your large fortune. What need has she to work?"

"Because she will be happier if she is usefully employed. Besides, the wheel of fortune is a revolving one, and though to-day we may be rolling in luxury, to-morrow may find us crushed beneath the Juggernaut of misfortune. Listen while I briefly relate the story of my early womanhood. I would I might write it as with a pen of fire upon the brain of every mother in the land! Oh I cannot tell you what an intense interest I feel in the young girls growing up around me. My heart yearns to urge them to make a speciality of whatever the inclinations prompt them most to do, and then concentrate every effort upon that one pursuit until they excel in it. But to my story: I was the daughter of wealthy parents, the youngest child by several years, and of course a great pet. Of an extremely delicate organization, my kind and indulgent mother shielded me from every hardship, and I grew into womanhood a novice in the art of housekeeping. From a child I was passionately fond of reading, and at school excelled in all my studies. Pleased with the