A Real Love Story.

[Written for the "News."]

There is always and forever some secret of fascination about love stories and sentimental tales that delight in reading them. Young folks or old are much the same in love affairs as it seems, and like to hear of them and read about them, and of course in holiday time it is expected there will be lots of stories of love and adventure written for the newspapers and magazines of home production. Nowadays writers usually begin in the middle of the story instead of a preamble or explanation in detail. Old fashioned story telling was different which was a little dull; then all stories began with "A long time ago," and similar phrases, but now that would be old style, and one must conform to the taste of the present day, as far as possible, even in telling stories.

In an obscure part of the state of New York thing ago by the ways, when my story opens there was much hard work to be done by men and boys (and women had their share, too, only it was different) clearing away the woods to get room to live; some men had settled to cut down the magnificent old trees, "monarchs of the forest," that had stood for generations, not only to get material to build with but land to build on. And so the forefathers of many of the present generation lived in the woods (so to speak) and occupied their time in subduing the earth and making the land fertile; gathering up the stones and building walls around their broad acres, that they made productive with much toil and hard service. Where many of the large cities and towns now stand were once great forests of oak, hickory, pine, maple and other trees indigenous to the country. The boys and girls of today know very little of the industry and thrift it has taken to settle the land now so prosperous and full of wealth and of people. The country folks had to depend mostly upon their own exertions, instead of fortunes left them from rich ancestors; they had come away from their ancestral homes, or their fathers had, and the only legacy they counted upon was the honor and honesty of those whose names they bore; and men rose as it were into fame on their merits, to be leaders of the people, or "heroes in the strife" instead of being honored by political honors. I guess that must be why we hear people talk of "the good old days." I am not much into my story or my readers will think this is a preamble.

In a very old house, built for those primitive days, in central New York, a widow with her family of daughters and one son was living contentedly, it seemed, but the Western fever came and the young man wanted to seek his fortune in the new West. He had confided to his mother his idea of leaving York state, but she scarcely thought he could be in earnest so determined when they were alone one day to sound him on the subject. And addressing her eldest, said, "And so you too, my own rangel (my friend, have you, to go further west, George?" and she looked up at her boy who towered a head above her without his locks. "Yes, decidedly. I've tried teaching here, and working on the farm as well, and I'm not getrin on fast enough, and even if I were, I have the Western fever. I want to do my work on a larger scale than one can in a small town. I prefer prairies to woods, I think, there's more room to breathe in."

"I can't see anything you have to complain of here," said his mother. "You are highly respected according to your years, George, think how young you are, though you do seem much older, from your manner quite as much as your height, I fancy. I do think your cares have been too many; if the girls had married and left their homes off their own, your responsibilities would have been lighter."

"I'm not complaining of anything, and especially of my sisters; they are provided for by their father's will, except one, and I shall always care for her until she marries, and watch over her afterwards, you may depend upon that, but that's another matter; I'm not there, I'm going West. I shall start out alone as soon as my affairs are settled, if you are unwilling to leave the homestead, mother, so that's settled."

Mrs. Fleming knew it was no use remonstrating when George made up his mind, so she said no more, but went about with a sorrowful face and anxious look, for she loved the old home, and sometimes she fancied sentiment had died out in the world, and she was fully aware that the girls would object to her going, but she must go with her boy, he was the pride of her life, and she felt disappointed more on his account really that the girls had not married when they were young enough. Now they were decidedly too particular and their opportunities for choosing were not so good, as they had been formerly; though they still entertained some of their old beaux. It had been coming in the course of events, she and Mrs. Fleming was not a match maker and consequently her things take their course, much the wisest plan.

The weather was extremely cold and the family always sat together in the evening in the long dining room and entered each other's society; it saved fire and work for one and then they liked it better, and the parlor fire was only lighted on state occasions, or the best chamber when company for that matter, that was reserved for people from a distance, Albany or New York City, or some great relation, then the family were well connected, and would entertain royally, and were rather fond of it, especially in a quiet time when the days were dull and they were tired of indoor occupations. The family circle by of them, (so, in the high chests of drawers, and flannel is abundance, all home-made, and dyed in shades from lavender, all the colors, folks knew how to spin and weave in those days, and sewed, too, and knitted, and made her own outfit of linen and the like, when she was going to be married, and the daughters of the Revolutionary line, born while she was the wife of the Sir Stratos (Illinois), were not behind hand in their thrift, and knitted and spun linen and flannel and mosey-woolsey, and of their own wool, of course). But aside from all this comparatively new material—there were sheets and blankets and such like, these things made at a still earlier period in Mrs. Jane Fleming's day (she who was Betty Warner) there was plenty of linen as fine as linen, it had the sanctity of age, and Mrs. Fleming, mem. (as present, Mrs. Fleming) was as much as proud of her own name and lineage as the Flemings themselves. If not more so, was asked to be married in Van Dykes who had settled in Manhattan (very old Dutch family, very scarcely and very as valiant in resisting the British as the Yankees were, and a great deal more, if they were not braver but she was not quite so sure of that.

On the day when George announced his decision in decisive terms to his mother, she pondered over all the changes that would have to be made in their manner of living, and what the breaking up would involve, and she thought how little George knew, if he had generous as he was, what it would be to the women of the family, this sundering of old ties, this going out from the home into the wide world, world for which he yearned with passionate intensity. "I don't know, I don't know, I don't know, but it was the destiny."

Mrs. Fleming felt, too, she was no longer a young woman, and had her ships, and those who looked back upon the past it was no wonder she felt, if her hair was partly silvered with frost, and though she was straight and true in figure, and her eyes were full of fire, yet she felt, perhaps, because she was surrounded with young people, yet she almost felt aged. She had known Mr. George's mother and considered all this it must mean to be in particular. The quite quiet Mrs. Fleming was not of war sure they had not thought of it, as certainly at all, and she determined to be cheerful, and to make Christmas was her usual preparations and already began for the annual holiday. And with the thoughts of Christmas came the flood of memories sweeping through her soul and wetting her in tears. But she wiped away the tears with that old-fashioned mantery that will not let people see her cry.

Evening was drawing near and supper over, the family gathered around the great fire (for there was logs enough, mighty on the premises from fire-dogs. The tall brass candle sticks on the high mantel were lighted (though they were only tallow dips, and on the great oak table, drawn near the fire, a lamp (some old family heirloom) gave an ugly light by which, with the aid of the fire, the evening work was done; night caps and socks, for the boys, and sewing, embroidery, needlog, knitting of all kinds, fancy or plain, as well as practical.

Ruth, the eldest daughter, noticed her mother's sedate demeanor, but she (as usual) was cheerful and smiling and observed to her sisters aside, as her mother sat, her hands resting, knitting as usual, "Do you see how worried mother looks; I'm afraid she's ill or may be she is tired of us all, and may be she is thinking of something more careful about her, she does far too much for her time of life." But Grace Ann, the youngest, was positive, quite different, in marriage would be an agreeable surprise to us all. It is that he is going West in the spring." For a minute no one spoke, each one waited for the other; finally Ruth, who was leader in all the other girls as a survivor in judgment, addressing her mother, said, "Don't permit it by any means, it will get the ile of fever and ague, he can never stand the climate."

"Unfortunately it is quite impossible to prevent him, we should be obliged to break up the home, and therefore I am more than glad Christmas is upon us and the company we expect, we can enjoy ourselves with our friends once again before we say good bye."

"But mother, suppose he's going, we'll keep the home all right, and George will be glad to bring you back and Elsie too, for of course we'll go if you do, though why either of you need to go more than I can see," said Ruth persistently speaking for her sister.

"But you forget my dears, this is the Fleming house, and that in your father's lifetime we lived at the rectory where all the rest of you were made up your mind, have you, to go further west, George?" and she looked up at her boy who towered a head above her without his locks. "Yes, decidedly. I've tried teaching here, and working on farm as well, and I'm not getrin on fast enough, and even if I were, I have the Western fever. I want to do my work on a larger scale than one can in a small town. I prefer prairies to woods, I think, there's more room to breathe in."

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