

LOVE IN THE FAR WEST.

One rainy day in the early Winter of 1882 I found myself bag and baggage on the railway platform at Grand Junction, Colorado.

I had been traveling through the West during the Summer, and now on my way here I had stopped to see one who was my oldest and dearest friend, the wife of the superintendent of a mine on the headwaters of the White River. She had tried to prepare me for the discomforts of the journey after I should leave the railroad, but I found no words could describe it as vividly as I afterwards felt it, and I heartily wished myself safe in the luxury of a Pullman and speeding eastward. However, I pulled myself together and went to the agent to ask when the stage would leave for Meeker, and found I could not go till morning; so giving a small boy a quarter to carry my grip, I gingerly picked my way along the uneven and dirty brick causeway that led to the town proper. The next morning was clear and pleasant and the air bracing as we dragged laboriously out north through the almost bottomless clay road. There were no other passengers, but two men and myself, so I turned my attention to the scenery.

The two men had eyed me curiously at first, and then began talking of mines and the various arts and tricks of the unscrupulous to outwit the gullible tenderfoot. But gradually they overcame their apparent diffidence in addressing a woman, and began after true American style to want to know all about my antecedents, and above all my reason for taking such an unusual journey. When I told them I expected to visit Mrs. Renfrow at the Tin Cup Mine one whistled expressively and said: "You'll be likely to stay all winter."

"Why?" I asked.

"Because, if signs go for anything there is going to be an everlasting snow-fall before long."

All the discomforts of my journey were forgotten in the overflowing enthusiasm of my welcome. Over and over again did "My Margaret," as I had called her in oldtime school days, rush in from her little log kitchen to ask me if there was anything she could do to ease my aching bones. As I looked around the little rooms, unplastered save with grout dug from neighboring hills, I began to appreciate the decorative possibilities of dotted Swiss and red ribbons, but then Margaret could find beauty to utilize on the bleakest of desert isles. From my seat by the same window I could see the log mine buildings on the opposite slope of the gulch, and the day shift coming out like bees from a hive and scattering to the various shanties dotted along the side of the stream. As I looked Margaret came and looked over my shoulder and exclaimed: "There's John," and then, "Why, what can be the matter," for just behind him on an improvised stretcher of pine boughs four men were carrying another, so stiff and still it did not seem as if he could be living.

Margaret said: "Help me get a bed ready," and by the time the men reached the door with their burden a bed was stripped to mattress and sheets, and they had laid him upon it, while John said, briefly: "An accident to the machinery. He is not dead, but I don't know how badly hurt."

We soon found one arm and one leg broken, but no evidence of other injury. Mr. Renfrow, with the assistance of two of the men, who through many years of Western life had learned a rough sort of surgery, set the limbs, while the women waited the result in suspense. Through the long night we watched beside the poor fellow for some signs of consciousness, and towards morning were rewarded by seeing him open his eyes and recognize Mr. Renfrow.

During the weeks of nursing which followed we women had not much time to think of weather, but my friend at Meeker had been a true prophet, and the featherly flakes began to fall during the first night after my arrival and kept it up steadily for a week, and trail and canyon and side slope were covered with a white pall.

We were as securely shut up from the outside world as if we had been walled around with adamant. While one's sympathies can not fly round the world with the click of the electric needle, one naturally seeks for subjects of interest in the humdrum life around and so I began to study our charge as I sat beside him day after day. Not that he seemed a difficult subject or wrapped in any mystery, but as he lay there swathed in bandages he seemed to be intently thinking. One day he abruptly asked how long since he had been hurt. I told him three weeks. He turned his head away with a deep sigh and said no more for a few minutes. Then he asked: "Bout how far is it to Cairo, Ill.?" I said I didn't know exactly, though nearly a thousand miles.

"Wish I was there," he jerked out, with an effort.

I began to suspect "That the girl I left behind me," was troubling him and he wanted to talk about it and did not know how to begin. So I rather banteringly said: "Tell me about her."

He looked at me with a look of comical dismay, and said, "Why, how did you know?" and then said: "I might as well tell some one, though there ain't much to tell. I used to live down at Cairo, and was a roustabout on a Mississippi steamer. There was another fellow always worked on the same gang with me, and we were thicker than molasses in Winter. He was as vain as a peacock and thought he was some one when he got on his Sunday togs, and he was a purty sizeable sort of a feller. Well, there was a girl who lived down the river a few miles, whose dad run a truck farm and sent garden sass to St. Louis, you know. Hank Simpson and me both met her at a dance one night. I got introduced first and danced twice with her before Simpson did, and then she danced several times with him, and

when I come up once to ask her she said she couldn't as she was going to dance with Mr. Simpson. That made me hot, and I went and told Hank he was not doing the fair thing, not allowing her to dance with any one but him. He laughed, and said she didn't seem to think it any hardship. Well, we both got mad, and I told him I would dance with her anyway, and I went back and said Hank couldn't keep his engagement. Well, she danced with me, but Hank and me were enemies and he did me every bad turn he could. Well, I used to go down the river every Sunday to old man Leo's place, and sometimes found Hank Simpson there, and he went down sometimes in the week. I couldn't tell which of us Elsie liked the best or whether she was fooling both of us. She was pretty enough for better than us."

Here a tender note crept into his voice.

"I had to go down on the boat to Vicksburg, which would take about two weeks, as we would have to wait for a cargo. It was a regular purgatory to me all the time I was gone, for I was afraid Hank would get the best of me, and I made up my mind to have it out when I got back. The next Sunday I went down. I had bought a ring in Vicksburg, with two clasped hands holding a little garnet, to give her, and thought maybe that would help me out. I found her in a little arbor in a corner of the garden. She seemed glad to see me, but she acted the same to Hank, so I couldn't tell anything from that. She asked me about the trip, and wanted to know if I had lost my heart to any pretty girl in Vicksburg. I thought it was now or never, so I said: 'How could I when I left it at home?'"

"Who took care of it while you were gone," she asked.

"I'd like to think you did," I said.

"I wish, Elsie, you could like me a little better than Hank Simpson. You know how much I care for you."

"She looked down and dug her shoe into the dirt and said: 'How should I? You never told me.'"

"Well, I tell you now, and I can't bear to think of Hank coming here to see you when I want you to marry me."

"Elsie looked at me and then said: 'Why, Bob, I didn't know that you meant anything.'"

"Well, Miss Majors, she didn't make much fuss when I put my arm around her and kissed her. I felt as if I was in heaven and even felt sorry for Hank Simpson. I wanted to do something great that would make me worthy to have Elsie for my wife. After she had given me her promise I didn't care for Hank Simpson and wasn't a bit jealous of him. She told me that she had begun to care for me at the dance, but had been afraid to cross Hank, as he had such a temper."

"Maybe you want to know why I am away out here. Well, Elsie and me agreed that it was no use trying to make any money to buy a home working for day's wages on the river. I heard that good men in the mines in the mountains got big wages and so I thought I would try. I went to see Elsie the night before I came away and she cried and hung to me till I almost lost my courage to go, but I did. I have been here a year now and saved a good deal. I have written to Elsie every time any one went to Meeker, and had letters pretty often. We were to have been married at Christmas, and now it is only a month away, and here I am laid up for the winter and snowed in, too! What will Elsie think when she don't hear from me?"

The poor fellow turned his head away with tears in his eyes. By way of consolation, I said: "You may be able to send a letter soon."

"No," he said, "there's ten foot of snow in White Canyon."

He seemed in the depths of misery and I left him.

Two weeks slipped away, and the weather was steadily cold, with occasional light falls of snow, and as Bob Traversy looked out of his little window at the rounded outlines of the peaks I could see that his heart was far away with the girl he loved, perhaps thinking that his rival was taking advantage of his silence to catch a heart on the rebound. A week before Christmas the weather suddenly moderated and the air felt as balmy as spring. The snow melted rapidly and began to disappear in our little valley and on the lower slopes of the mountain. Every now and then on some distant peak we could see a slide come down, leaving a black trail behind. Christmas day Bob could have his arm out of its sling, but even the fact of his injuries healing so rapidly had no effect upon his spirits. In the morning he said to me: "If I were only in Cairo to-day! Elsie will think I am dead!"

A couple of days before Christmas two of the men had announced their intention of trying to get to Meeker. Mr. Renfrow warned them to be careful, and above all things not to get caught in a slide. In the afternoon I was sitting reading to Bob, who was lying with his face to the wall and apparently not paying much attention. Suddenly he turned over.

"Have I been asleep?" he asked.

"No, why?" I asked.

"I've been dreaming awake then. I thought I heard Elsie's voice."

Then sitting straight up in bed without any regard for broken legs, he ejaculated with the greatest astonishment and joy: "Elsie!"

I turned to the door, and there was the living embodiment of the pretty girl whose picture Bob kept under his pillow. But only an instant she stood there, and then had both arms around Bob, crying and laughing by turns.

It seems she had arrived at Meeker a week before, but could get no one to venture with her through the snow to the Tin Cup Mine until the fortunate arrival of the two miners. The only thing that prevented a wedding on Christmas was that there was no minister nearer than Grand Junction.—Elizabeth C. Holland in the Omaha Bee.

A BASE DECEIVER.

She shook her head. "No, no," she said, "A kiss you can not borrow."

"Perhaps—maybe—that is, I'll see, maybe I will to-morrow."

"Maybe you will," he cried, "but still—But, please! Why should I doubt it? Of course, I know that time drags slow, yet I can wait without it."

"If that's the case," she cried, "her face Quite white, 'you, sir, can leave me. To think (too) too, to think that you, You wretch! I could so deceive me!"

—Tom Mason.

He Was Liberal.

A writer in *Harper's Magazine* says that the summer residents of a Cape Cod town made up their minds that they must have a casino. The building was intended pretty strictly for their own use, but it seemed wise to enlist the interest of the natives in the project, especially as the projectors wished to secure a site at as low a figure as possible. A building and finance committee was appointed and an old resident, Mr. Buffon, was made one of the three members of it.

He was the owner of the lot on which the summer cottagers had set their hearts. At the first meeting of the Committee the matter of contributions was broached. Mr. Buffon left his colleagues in no doubt as to his position. He declined to contribute a cent.

Then the two cottagers labored with him over the site. Fifteen hundred dollars was his lowest figure. They explained to him the advantages that would accrue to the place through the erection of a casino, and the inevitable enhancement of the value of his other property; but he held out for \$1,500. Finally one of the Committee said: "Mr. Buffon, you should either knock off something from the price of the lot, or, if we buy it for \$1,500, you should make a handsome contribution."

"Well," said Mr. Buffon, "I am ready to do something for you. I can't let the land go for less than \$1,500, but if you'll make the figure \$1,600, I'm ready to contribute \$100 to the fund."

The meeting was adjourned on motion of one of the summer visitors.

All in His Wife's Name.

"I tell you," he said emphatically, "something has got to be done or the so-called business men of this age will wreck the country. It's an outrage, sir, an outrage upon honest men that the scamps should be given the opportunity that they are given under the present system."

"What's the matter now?" the excited man was asked, according to the *Detroit Free Press*.

"Matter, sir, matter?" he exclaimed. "Why you can't tell whom you can trust. You find a man in a responsible position, respected and looked up to by society, and before you have time to say to yourself, 'He's all right,' he's cheated you in a horse trade or skipped out with some trust funds. You can't trust any one, sir. They're all looking for a chance to get the best of you, and they don't care how they do it. Look at the case of the Steenth street bank! Solid as a rock yesterday and to-day the doors are closed. It's a swindle, sir, a downright swindle, and I'll wager that if the truth were known it would be found that the officers have been speculating with the funds or something of that sort."

"Did you have any money in the bank?"

"Well, I should say I did! Every cent that I put in my wife's name before I failed the last time was in that bank."

Casablanca.

The boy was on deck at the office door, and he was vigilant.

"Where's the editor?" asked a big, ugly-looking visitor.

"Upstairs," responded the boy.

"Well, I want to see him."

"What for?"

"I want to lick him for something he said in his paper about me."

"You can't see him," and the boy braced himself.

"Why can't I?"

"Cause you can't—that's why. If I let every duffer in that wanted to lick the boss we never would have time to get the paper out, and the paper's got to come out if we have to hire a man to come down and stand guard with a little of hot water. See?"—*Detroit Free Press*.

Human Nature.

Magistrate—Why did you run away from Farmer Furrow? Didn't you get enough to eat?

Bound Boy—Got plenty.

"Did you get enough clothes?"

"Had lots."

"Were you worked too hard?"

"Hadn't much ter do."

"Was it lonely there?"

"Nope; I had a good enough time."

"Then why did you run away?"

"Cause I had a good chance."—*Good News*.

How Much He Knew.

A colored porter at a Washington hotel had charge of the hats of the guests who went in to dine. His accuracy and promptness in giving every man his own "tile" as he came out of the dining room excited one gentleman's curiosity.

"How did you know so well that this was my hat?" he asked.

A smile lighted up the waiter's ebony face as he bowed politely.

"Boss," he said, "I didn't know it was yours, but it's de one you giv me!"

Several Fibres.

Snobber—Bah! there isn't a single fibre of manhood about Wangle!

Fitzkins—You forget something.

Snobber—I should like to know what?

Fitzkins—His whiskers.—*Tid Bits*.

What Annoyed Her.

Miss Bleecker—Sue Manhattan got her back up yesterday.

Miss Emerson (of Boston)—What caused her to elevate her vertebral column?—*Judge*.

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