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WAVERLAND.

A TALE OF OUR COMING LANDLORDS.

BY SARAH MADE BRIGHAM.

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"I told her that no heir of Waverland would ever think of marrying beneath his own rank or station in life. And that it had long been settled that Annie Wren was to be your wife."

"How could you, mother?" I gasped. "I have never thought of such a thing! You do not know me, mother."

"I did it for her good. I loved her very dearly and could not bear to think of her suffering. I have watched her closely and I know she valued your society more than anything else."

"What next, mother?" I asked, as she paused a moment.

"When I told her of Annie, her cheek flushed painfully, and her lip quivered. After a moment's silence she said, 'You are right, Lady Waverland. I will leave here at once.' She left the room, and about an hour after she came to me and thanked me for my kindness, and said she would never forget the happy hours she had passed here. Then she took Myrtle in her arms and wept like a child. I urged her to stay here until she could find another place, or else to let me know where she was going. But she remained firm and said she would find a home somewhere."

While my mother had been speaking, tears were streaming down her cheeks. I could not blame her. But could I let my darling go thus? I alone knew how dear she was to me. When my mother had finished, I said:

"You do not know me, mother. Stella or no one will be my wife."



Stella or no one will be my wife.

"O, do not say that, my son!" said my mother, in a pleading tone.

"I mean what I say, my dear mother, and I blame myself for not having spoken before," I said, and left the room. What had changed the world so in one short hour? The rooms had lost their sunshine. The very birds seemed sad and still.

I called for my horse and rode to the railway station, not far away, hoping to hear some news of Stella. The agent said she had been there, but he could not tell to where she had bought her ticket.

I returned and sought Stella's room. Perhaps I might find something to tell me where she had gone. I was disappointed. Still there was some comfort in seeing the things that she had arranged and used. They were a part of her. Motionless, yet with a voice most eloquent, they spoke of my lost love. Turning from this little sanctuary where she had lived, and perhaps, sometimes thought of me, I went to my own room. How my heart hungered for one answering look or word to tell me that I was remembered! Sitting in silence, memory lived over the past few months. Her words and acts I treasured up from out the past, as weary miners gather up the tiniest particles of dust that glistens with the precious ore. Again and again I held her hand, and felt the sweet caressing touch of her soft fingers, or stood watching her expressive face when under the influence of music or some enchanting scene. How it would beam with happiness! Then my mind would follow out the vexing thought: why did she leave Waverland? Where was she now? Perhaps among strangers and without money. I did not know she had a shilling. I remembered that she had paid the house-keeper from her own purse. Had she been repaid? I had no means of knowing. She kept her own accounts.

In the morning, going to Stella's room, I found her account book and read this entry among many others: "Paid house-keeper fifty pounds from my private purse." But looking through the whole housekeeping list there was no mention of payment to herself.

"Mother, do you know how much money Stella had when she left?" I asked, while we were sitting at the breakfast table.

"No, she never said anything about herself or her money. I remember when she paid the house-keeper I told her it was not wise to pay Lord Waverland's debts. She only laughed and said she could soon save it from the housekeeping fund. I never mentioned it again, neither did she."

"Will Stella come back again?" asked Myrtle.

"I cannot tell, my child," said mother.

After breakfast I rode to the village, finished my business, then turned homeward or anywhere. Life had lost its purpose. As I was passing the little school house I thought Stella might have stopped there. I halted at the door and knocked with the handle of my riding whip. Mrs. Malcolm came to the door.

"Was Miss Everett here yesterday?" I asked.

"Yes, sor, she ware here, but she had been weeping, bless her dear heart."

"Did she tell you she was going away?" I asked.

"No, sor, but she said good-bye to all of us."

I roamed about with but one aim or object. To gain some tidings of my lost friend was my one absorbing thought. I searched every paper, hoping she would advertise. I rode for miles in every direction, hoping for some news. But all to no purpose.

What a dreary old place Waverland had become! It had lost all its sunshine and lay in a deep dark shadow. Even my mother kept her room, and dinner and breakfast were lonely times. No more duets. No more lively conversations and discussions. Sir Wren failed to find comfort in playing whist. Annie seemed as lonely as myself and only made short calls, while Myrtle could not reconcile herself to live without Stella. When I came home she would come hurrying out to meet me, asking:

"Have you found Stella?" Then, with measured steps she would return to her mother.

One evening about a week after Stella's departure, I came home from a long ride more sad and lonely than ever. After eating a few mouthfuls of supper I went to my room, thinking I would form some plan for leaving Waverland. As I sat trying to decide what course to pursue, I heard Stella's voice as plainly as I ever did in my life, saying: "If I were you I would not let my inheritance go to waste." I started from my chair and looked around. It seemed to me that she was near. But it was only a tempting dream. There was no bright face with a welcoming smile. Only empty space. But I had been aroused. I began to think what she would have me do. I made myself a promise that I would fulfill her wish and save my inheritance. I would strive to be a man worthy of her love if we ever met again. Then came to my mind the words we had often sung together:

"When shall we meet again?
Dear heart, the time is long!
That brings this discord strain,
Like minor in a song."

"Some day the clouds will lift
From off my waiting heart;
And through the golden rift
Sun-tinted beams will dart."

"For on that day you'll come,
Your hand will touch my own
My heart, now sadly dumb,
Will speak for you alone."

That seemed a sweet promise for the future, and I was comforted. I believed that Stella was safe and that sometime we would meet again. What a sense of rest came to my mind, bringing by the aid of memory all her quiet ways and pleasant words back again, until I seemed to feel her very presence. I was anxious to do some good deed to be worthy of her pure love. Can mind take form and visit mind? Yes, I believe that sympathy of love can unite as though distance may intervene. But would she believe what my mother said, that Annie and I were engaged? O, mother, how could you tell her that! Annie and I had been playmates, but with my love for her compared with this strong, deep passion, that filled my waking thoughts and visited my dreams? My Stella was my queen, my life-star, and if I failed to find her I felt that life would be a failure.

Moving some furniture one day in Stella's room a little blank envelope fell to the floor. I picked it up and found it was not sealed. Surely here was the message I had longed for. I hastened to my room to examine the contents. I had not a doubt that it was for me, until I opened it. I found a little square card divided into thirty-six equal parts. Twenty-seven were closed and nine were open. Such a card, at college, the boys called a grating. It was used to decipher messages when great secrecy was desired. What was the message? Should I read? For a little while I debated with myself, then curiosity prevailed, and I tried. It was addressed "To my darling," and contained the following words:

ldonra	eoiveld
riacp	eoivern
Hzskz	hdvare
mnerec	swmalt
roveak	awtice
yrfaom	drfise

There was no meaning to the words in this shape. But I had learned the use of the grating years ago, when we had planned midnight raids about the buildings and grounds of the university. I copied the first row of words into squares corresponding to the thirty-six equal parts of the grating. Then I placed the card with the nine open squares over my letters, carefully observing the little cross on the upper left hand corner, which marked the top. Then the letters revealed through the spaces were: d, n, a, l, g, n, e, k, r. There was no more meaning than before. But I replaced my card, moving the cross to the right hand upper corner; these letters were visible: a, p, s, n, e, v, a, r, m.

I turned the grating once more. The cross now came to the lower right hand corner and these were the letters that appeared through the openings: o, k, r, o, y, f, o. I turned the grating once more. The cross now came at the lower left corner. I read: l, r, a, e, t, t, e, r, e. Mechanically I arranged the other letters and obtained as a result the following letters:

vedrawdef
onosttere
vedrawdes
elrahemal

At the university when we had deciphered a message by the use of the grating we wrote all the letters together and then separated them into words. I wrote the seventy-two letters in the order that I had discovered them, and had the following: d, n, a, l, g, n, e, k, r, a, e, t, t, e, r, e, v, e, d, r, a, w, d, e, s, e, l, r, a, h, e, m, a, l.

That was all. The enigma seemed as meaningless as ever. Discouraged, I leaned back in my chair and threw my hands behind my head. My writing was revealed to me in the looking-glass that hung above the table. I caught the letters forming the word Everett. Quick as thought I solved the mystery. The message had been written backward, and the glass had made it right. I followed out the thought and obtained: "I am Charles Edward Everett, son of Edward Everett, earl of York from Raven's Park, England."

The message was plain, but the mystery remained. Evidently it was from some relative or friend of the same family name of my lost darling. It revealed nothing to me. I placed the card, the message and my solution in the envelope and put it in my note book. It was something to keep. Like a little withered flower, it reminded me of my lost friend. Where was she now? If I could only know that she was safe and with friends.

CHAPTER VIII.—WHAT CAUSED THE FAMINE.

Once more I had an object to attain. There was work for me to do, and I was ready to begin. The most important work was to plan greater comfort for my tenants; I never dreamed of opposition in carrying out the methods used by Sir Wren; of changing my tenants into laborers. The first farmer I visited lived in an old hut surrounded by filth of every description. I knocked at the door, and was admitted into a room where a man, a woman, six children, a cow and four pigs all lived huddled into a space of not more than twelve by sixteen feet.

Mike came to the door, looking as though he feared my presence meant eviction. As he came to me I offered my hand, and, after a cordial hand-shake, I said:

"Mike, would you like to give up your holding and hire out to me?"

"Och, thin, ye're going to be worse thin the old master and turn us out all together," he said, shaking his powerful fist by way of emphasis; while the woman came nearer in a threatening manner.

"No, Mike," I said, in a friendly way, "you mistake me. I want to make you more comfortable. On your small holding you can hardly raise enough to keep your family from want. But if you will work for me, I will give you good wages for

yourself, your wife, and all the children that are large enough to work."

"My father lived here and his father before him, and now as soon as ye're master ye come to root us out of the soil!" he said, slapping his fist in my face, while his wife kept coming nearer and showing the signs of an angry tigress about to spring.

"But, Mike," I protested, "I want you to live more comfortable. It is hard work to live in this way," pointing to the pigs and cow.

"Ye want the cow turned out to die, so we can't pay our rent," said Mike, "thin ye'd turn us from our home. No, yer may leave us to ourselves."

I tried to reason with him, but could not make him believe but that I meant to harm him. Mike was honest, industrious and sober, but the few acres he held were not enough to keep his family from want if he never paid any rent. Yet I could not make him believe it was for his good I made the offer.

I visited a dozen farmers, but they were all of the same opinion as Mike, and preferred to live in filth and degradation rather than give up their little holdings. Instead of helping them as I had planned to do, I nearly caused an insurrection. The men gathered together and were ready to fight if I persisted in asking them to change. I soon found the reason for such filthy yards and houses was fear of the rent being raised if the place looked thrifty. Very carefully I set to work to overcome their mistaken prejudices.

I had commenced the work of improvement before Stella had left, as she had advised on that day which seemed to me years ago. O, why was I silent that morning! If I had only spoken the loving words within my heart, I might have kept her by my side. How much I missed her now! I had learned to value her words of counsel. Her ready tact would influence the tenants to do her will, as I often found. When I offered any plan for change if she had ever spoken of it to them they were very willing to accept it. Gradually I had to learn her way of dealing with the people and was guided accordingly. It was the story of Topsy and Eva over again. Stella was the Eva to teach me these things; and I followed her lead. As I followed out that principle the tenants began to trust me. I started improvements that gave them work, and the wages gave them a good many comforts.

After a good deal of thought and some expense I had the satisfaction of knowing that every tenant had a comfortable house and that the pigs and cows were sheltered without being members of the family.

It was a beautiful morning in January; the trees and shrubs were clothed with the fairy garb that Jack Frost loves to deck the world in, when I rode over to Sir Wren's to receive instructions for my London visit. He was in his favorite place, the library. He looked up as I entered, and extended his hand, saying:

"I began to think you had forgotten your promise, Loyd. But there is time enough yet. O, by the way, your new theory did not work; came near having a row, I hear."

"Yes, Sir Wren, I thought I had got into a hornet's nest. Even the women were ready to fight me. How did you make the change?"

"It was mostly done before I bought the estate. The former owner, Lord Sanders, had used it for a pasture farm, and had very few tenants. He had a time clearing it, as there were some two or three hundred families on the estate when he bought it. He had them all evicted, though every one had paid his rent quite promptly. Father O'Hale said it was the saddest sight he ever saw when that whole village was turned from home without food or shelter. He said some among them were sick and the excitement and exposure were more than they could stand. He was called to offer consolation to the dying who lay by the roadside in the rain and cold. Every tenant house in the whole village was burned. Lord Sanders never dared to live here. His sheep and cattle were driven away in spite of his agent's watchfulness. Finally he was obliged to sell. That is the way I have laborers instead of tenants."

"I think a landlord would have a lively time of it if he should try to evict tenants at Waverland. Am I in time for the business you wished done at London?"

"Yes, here are the documents," said Sir Wren, as he went to his desk and brought me a packet. "Here is a letter of introduction to the Duke of Melborne. That will prove an open sesame to political circles."

I bade him good-bye, received his friendly God-speed, then returned home and finished my arrangements for a few weeks' absence.

Arriving at my destination in London, I sought the lawyer to whom I was to deliver my packet, transacted the business entrusted to my care, and went out to find the Duke of Melborne. He was at his club room. I gave him the letter from Sir Wren. He read it, then in the most cordial manner made me feel at ease.

The Duke of Melborne was tall and strikingly handsome, with expressive brown eyes, dark curly hair and a clear blue complexion. He had the stately bearing of an English nobleman. He introduced me to a young man, a friend of his, Colonel Haynes, from America, to Lord Sanders, an owner of American land and to some dozen more. The young American was a powerful looking man, with black hair, penetrating black eyes that could sparkle with wit or melt into tenderness, a clear, ringing voice and a graceful manner. Lord Sanders was a dried-up little man, with a dark, squeezed-up face, small, restless black eyes and a long straight nose. He was dressed in black, with boots as shiny as his eyes. He had a gold watch-chain with immense seals, depending from his hob, which he rattled to emphasize his speech.

"How is Sir Wren and his fair daughter?" asked the duke.

"They are quite well except the little rheumatics that kept Sir Wren at home just now," I answered. "They have had a niece of Sir Wren's visiting them from London. Are you acquainted with her?"

"Lady Irving, do you mean?" he asked, half indifferently, yet slightly anxious.

"That is her name. She is a widow and a beauty," I said.

"Rich young widows are usually good company," said Colonel Haynes. "But I think the English ladies are not as good-looking as our American women."

"I believe you are right there, said the duke. "And the American girls have more animation than ours."

"What is the latest news in Ireland?" asked Colonel Haynes, turning toward me as he spoke.

"Earl Spencer is ruling with a despotic sway," I said. "Anyone who has not been arrested or in prison is out of the fashion there now."

"Then Parnell must be the prince of Irish fashion," said Colonel Haynes.

"Parnell's a prince," sneeringly said the Duke of Melborne. "Yes, he is a prince to

gain a hoar on people's pockets; why, even, the Americans were galled into paying him large sums of money for his 'Irish sufferings.'"

"But Parnell did not use the money, it came to the people, as I can testify. I have seen ships from America loaded with provisions in our harbors, and I have seen those same provisions portioned out to the starving people of Ireland. I have also seen the English government paying an armed force to evict these same people without a thought of aid," I said, indignant that an Englishman, of all men, should accuse Parnell of trickery and dishonesty.

"Yes, Lord Waverland, you are right. I, too, have seen ships from the United States, in the Irish harbors, loaded with the same provisions that other ships were loaded with, that were leaving Ireland for England. It was not lack of food that made famine," said Colonel Haynes.

"That is true, sir," I said. "There is enough of everything raised in Ireland for her people to have plenty. At the very time when American food and money were being distributed to the suffering people they were sending from Ireland to England thirty large steamers every week, laden to the gunwales with fat cattle, sheep, pigs and the most expensive kinds of food."

"Then what made the famine?" asked the Duke of Melborne.

"The feudal system of land tenure under which Ireland is groaning is what caused it," I answered.

"Why, are you a landlord and yet advocate the tenants' rights so zealously?" asked Lord Sanders a little amused.

"Yes, Lord Sanders, I am a landlord, yet I would willingly yield my interest in the land as the Persians did theirs."

"Why, how was that?" asked Colonel Haynes.

"The land-owners were compensated for their lands by the government issuing bonds bearing four per cent interest to them, while the tenants paid the government five per cent on the bonds," I explained.

"Yes that sounds very well," said the Duke of Melborne. "But the Irish people never will be satisfied until they have driven every landlord out of Ireland and possess the land free of cost. Then in five years they will be ready for another gift of like value. The Irish are a thrifless, vagabond people, who never know the value of anything."

"Then they change mightily by coming to America," said Colonel Haynes. "To be sure, some of them are, as you say, vagabonds and drunks; but the most of them are sober, industrious people; and not only provide for themselves and their families, but send a large part of their earnings back to Ireland every year."

"I have tenants on my estate who could never pay the rent but for the aid that comes from boys and girls in America," I said. "And they are sober, hard-working men, anxious to keep their holdings."

"I think, Lord Waverland, that you have been taking lessons of Sir Wren," said the Duke of Melborne, walking back and forth through the room. "I remember he used to be very bitter against absent landlords."

"He thinks they are a curse to Ireland yet," I said, "by draining the country of a million pounds a year. He claims that no nation on earth could avoid famine under such a system."

"That remains to be seen," said Lord Sanders. "I know there are more tenant farmers in America, than in Ireland, Scotland and England combined. A large per cent of the land owners are Englishmen, too. Why, I derive nearly two hundred thousand dollars a year from tenant farmers in America, and I am not the only one who is reaping a rich reward from American labor. But there is no sign of a famine there, as yet."

"No," said the Duke of Melborne, "on the contrary, America is one of the most prosperous nations on the globe."

"We are a prosperous nation," said Colonel Haynes with animation, "but this heavy drain on our people may cause suffering before we are expecting it."

"O, bah, on your suffering! I expect to hear the American people begin to complain as a compliment to this infernal Irish agitation," said Lord Sanders, with more arrogance than usual. "I am not afraid of any complaints, as long as the laws are made to suit ourselves."

"But the laws are made by the people and for the people," protested Colonel Haynes.

"Ha, ha, you haven't cut your eye teeth yet," laughed Lord Sanders. "Why, every clause enacted by the Illinois Legislature has been in favor of the landlords. You cannot find a tenant in Ireland that is bound under such strict laws as my tenants in Illinois are."

"Then God pity them," I said.

"It seems to me," said Colonel Haynes, "that about the time Ireland is free from English landlords America will be pretty well burdened with them. The thought is repulsive. We love to call our land, 'The land of the free and the home of the brave.' Our forefathers fought and suffered a hundred years ago to make it a nation of homes. But not one drop of precious blood was ever given to make it a trading ground for English capitalists or to give foreigners the power to oppress our people!"

"Well, don't get excited," said Lord Sanders, going to the Colonel and placing his hand upon his shoulder in the most familiar manner. "We pay for the lands we get, and we have a right to buy wherever we choose. And, then, we have a right to use our own property as we wish. No government on earth has a right to say where I shall live or where I shall spend my money."

"That is true," said the Duke of Melborne, approvingly. "I hold large tracts of land in the United States now, and I intend to own ten times as much within the next five years."

"Hear! hear!" cried several voices. "So will we."

The evening passed before we realized it. Many besides ourselves had been interested in the discussions. The Duke of Melborne invited Colonel Haynes and myself to be his guests during our stay in London.

CHAPTER IX.—A TERRIFIC SHOCK.

Blue Ridge is beautifully located on the upper Thames several miles from London. The building is a handsome mansion, built at the beginning of the last century, when English gentlemen reveled in the luxury of spacious halls, superb galleries and magnificent reception rooms. The Duke of Melborne keeps quite a court of lords and ladies about him who amuse themselves according to their taste or fancy, while he remains free to go and come without restraint. There is always some plan for amusements being carried on by Lady Hortense, an aunt of the duke, who is the lady of the house and entertains his guests.

(Continued Tomorrow.)