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PLATTSMOUTH

NEBRASKA

WAVERLAND.

A TALE OF OUR COMING LANDLORDS.

BY SARAH MABIE BRIGHAM.

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CHAPTER XVII.—A HAPPY PARTY.

The next morning we were up bright and early. There is no drowsy fog here to keep one in bed until ten o'clock. Everything in nature has a charm for the early riser. We all met at the breakfast table. Melvorne and myself were the first, then Stella and her friend, Lady Irving. I had always thought Stella bright and beautiful, but this morning, with her simple gray gown, dainty neck trimming and soft wavy hair, I thought her more beautiful than ever, and as the face is an index to the mind, she must have been at peace with herself and all the world. A look of glad content lit up in all her expressive features and sparkled in her eyes.

"Well, what is the program for today?" asked Mr. Lollard, after the first general greetings had been given. "Are you to travel together?"

"Yes," came in a chorus from the entire party.

"I had thought we would visit Colorado Springs first, and take our bearings from there," said Mr. Lollard.

"Agreed," said Melvorne. "We will pass some interesting places there, but we cannot see everything."

We were soon on our way southward.

"Oh, there," cried Stella, "see the little steeples with hats on."

"That is Monument Park," said Melvorne as we rushed along.

"What queer mountains," said Lady Irving; "it seems as though there had been a mighty river here once that washed away all the earth except these little pillars that are left standing, like Lot's wife. Is that the theory of their creation?"

"No," said Mr. Lollard, consulting his guide book. "They are said to be formed by the currents of air which descend from the mountains in funnel-shaped currents and tornadoes."

"Colorado Springs!" cried the porter.

We gathered up the bundles, counting them to see that none had been lost. We had bundles now, for we had had companions. Ladies and bundles, roses and thorns.

This is a beautifully located city, I said, offering Stella my arm as we walked up the slight ascent to the hotel.

"Where are we going, Lollard?" asked the duke.

"To the Antlers."

It was an elegant building, occupying a prominent position on the rising ground. After securing our rooms, depositing our bundles and arranging our toilet, we met on the balcony to enjoy a view of the surrounding country.

"What is that massive outline that we see to the west?" asked Lady Irving.

"That is the range of mountains and that prominent peak is the famous Pike's Peak of history."

"What is that red tower which looks like a brick fortification, there to the northwest?" asked Stella.

"That's the gateway to the Garden of the Gods," answered Mr. Lollard, who stood with his guide book open in his hand ready to answer questions.

"Those mountains to the southwest are the Cheyenne. In them are some famous canyons," said the duke.

"Why, where has the sun gone to?" asked Mrs. Lollard. "It has disappeared."

"It has hid behind Pike's Peak," said Melvorne. "We have a long twilight here, for Colorado Springs lies under the afternoon shadow of ten thousand feet of eternal granite."

After an hour or two of quiet conversation we strolled out upon the streets. Here, as in Denver, they are lined on either side by tall, graceful trees. Some of the broad avenues are laid out with double rows of shade trees and a walk.

The city is under a thorough system of irrigation. Besides, the water brought in open ditches, there is an iron pipe to Ruxton's creek six miles away on the mountain side, which brings pure cold water from the melting snows on the mountain top.

"This must be a very wealthy city," said Stella, "judging from the beautiful houses and expensive public buildings which we see."

"It hardly seems possible that within ten or fifteen years a wild barren place could be changed to such a charming city," I said.

"I cannot comprehend it," said Stella. "In the old world some of the cities we visited were some of them thousands of years old and yet we did not see such evidence of wealth and culture as we find in the west."

"This is an elegant building. What is it?" I asked, pausing until Melvorne and Lady Irving came up.

"That is the opera house built for enjoyment by the people," he said.

"I wonder if there will be anything to see to-night?" asked Lady Irving.

"We can inquire. I see the door is open. Some one must be here," I said, and stepped inside. An old man was inside, dusting and arranging things.

"Sir," I asked, "will there be any kind of an entertainment here this evening?"

"Yes, sir," said the old man, "our own people give the 'Spy of the Rebellion' here to-night."

When I made my report it was agreed that we should see what home talent could do in this wild western town. We returned to our hotel and had a most substantial supper. The pure mountain air gave us keen appetites.

The opera house was a perfect jewel inside. Everything was in perfect accord with the most cultivated taste. The music was given by a full orchestra and was of a high grade. The play of thrilling interest, from the opening to the closing scene.

The home of wealth and comfort, where

we met on the balcony to enjoy a view of the surrounding country.

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love and the vestal name, was broken by the call "To Arms!" The maiden crushed the throbbing love within her heart, rather than give her hand in marriage to a rebel to his country.

The training of the Dutchman was the only mirthful scene in the whole play. His awkwardness brought forth peals of laughter. The prison scene must have been magnified to produce effect. No people on earth, in this enlightened age, would put such tortures on their fellow-men. The scene of revenge was fiendish.

Stella sat as though filled with horror. As soon as we were on the street she said: "Can that be true? Were there ever such scenes of horror during the American war?"

"It is hard to tell," I said. "I have heard of their terrible prison life, but never could form any idea of what it was."

When we met in the parlor the play was the topic of discussion. Not the merits of the actors, but the historical scenes which were represented.

"I do not believe they are true to life," said Melvorne. "The South is full of warm-hearted, hospitable people. It is the people of the north that are cold and heartless."

"But the North was very generous with them, certainly, in the time of reconstruction. They would do well to remember that," I said.

"So they were. But what an amount of suffering might have been saved if the government had bought the slaves and set them free. Let England take the warning. Here is a case of something like the English landlords in Ireland. If England would purchase a wise course, she would buy the lands and sell them to the tenant farmers; thereby no one will lose. But if Ireland wins in this struggle, they will confiscate the Irish estates and the landlords will have to submit. I think there would be some resentment harbored for generations to come," said Mr. Lollard with warmth.

"But the slave holders were in the wrong. They were holding men and women as property to be bought and sold, whipped or pelted, according to the masters' will," I said.

"And so the landlords are holding thousands on the rack of eviction," he argued.

"That is no reason why we should lose our property without pay for it," I answered.

"That is just the case with the southern people," said Lollard. "Thousands and thousands were thrown into bankruptcy by the loss of their slaves. The slaves were their wealth. A great many masters were against slavery as they are against evictions. The slaves were their property as your estate is your property. The masters were not to blame that the slaves were theirs. Generations had passed away since the wrong began. Neither are you to blame that your property is in Ireland. Many generations have passed away since that land was taken by force, it may be, from the natural owners. But the wrong exists. Some one must suffer. The slaves had fostered the slave trade until it became indelible. Then agitation began, and when a people begin to agitate, they defeat the wrong doer is not far distant."

"Then you believe landlords in Ireland are in about the same condition that the slaveholders were before the war?" I asked.

"Yes," said Lollard, "and I think it will end in about the same way unless England recognizes the rights of the Irish people. Ireland to-day has the sympathy of nearly the whole civilized world, and public opinion is a mighty lever towards removing an evil. My advice to you, my friend, is to sell your property while you can make reasonable terms with your tenants. For if England refuses to listen to Ireland in the coming campaign, she will hear again the terrific shock of last January. And it may mean destruction the next time!"

"There, Waverland, you see some one else thinks as I do, that you had better sell your property and invest in American lands."

"No, I will never add my influence to help make this beautiful land subject to the degrading influence that Ireland is laboring under; and which is the final result of absent landlords and great land monopolies."

"Now, let's close this lecture with some music," said Lollard changing the subject.

A call was made for music, and Lady Irving favored us with some instrumental solos, then Stella joined her in some duets, and at last we all joined in with our voices singing some old war songs that were lying on the grand piano in the hotel parlor.

Thus the first day of our sojourn together closed as it began, in an ecstasy of joy, too perfect for words to describe.

CHAPTER XVII.—FURTHER RAMBLINGS.

We had nominally agreed that Mr. Lollard should be business manager for the "Troupe" as we called ourselves.

"Where are we to go to-day?" Melvorne asked the next morning at breakfast. "That was our place and time of business each day."

"Glen Eyrie," said Mr. Lollard, "is first on my list. It is a drive of three miles by the Mesa road," he said, referring to his guide book which he kept in his pocket ready to refer to at any time.

We found the Mesa road as level as a table and rivaling in smoothness the most perfect boulevard. The view from this road is grand and comprehensive. Glen Eyrie is situated at the entrance of Queen's Canyon, and is a wild and romantic retreat in which is built the summer residence of a wealthy gentleman, whose permanent home is in the East. Within the glen which is made sylvan by the thickly growing native shrubbery covered by the wild clematis, is a great confusion of enormous pillars of exquisitely tinted pink sandstone.

"O, how beautiful!" exclaimed Lady Irving, as we passed into this magnificent garden of nature. "It reminds me of the scene described in Shakespeare's 'Midsummer Night's Dream.'"

"This is romantic enough for love in a cottage," said Melvorne, as we came to a gem of a house built in the Queen Anne style, with balconies, gables and trellised porches, and an avalanche of roofs.

"Yes," I said, "I think it would be delightful to choose a mate and live in this secluded bird's nest."

"And hear the soft murmur of the little stream that comes babbling down the valley," said Stella.

"These little rustic bridges have a charm for me," said Lady Irving. "Ruskin's idea of harmonious thought of art with nature, seems to have been developed in this little paradise, where the cool, clear water gurgling at our feet makes a musical accompaniment to the attractive scene."

"But to me the picturesque grandeur of the rugged cliffs is most fascinating," said Mrs. Lollard.

"Well, this is the summer home of Gen-

eral Palmer, the originator of the Denver & Rio Grande railway," said Lollard in his practical, business way. "The cascade that forms this little stream comes tumbling down the mountain side into the Devil's punch bowl, at the head of Queen's Canyon," he continued, reading his guide book.

"How nice to have a living guide book," laughed Melvorne, as we walked up the gentle rise of ground until we could look into the punch bowl called the Devil's Punch Bowl. Here we could go no farther without severe chafing, and as it was getting near lunch time, we preferred to use our time for refreshments rather than spend it climbing the mountain.

While we were at lunch Melvorne asked where we were to go next.

"To the Garden of the Gods," answered Lollard.

Our journey led through a smooth plain, with perpendicular walls of red and yellow sandstone, which marked the entrance to the garden.

"What a pleasant ride we have had over these smooth, hard roads; it reminds me of home," said Mrs. Lollard.

"It seems like the picturesque parts of England and Wales," said Melvorne.

"This, then, is the famous Garden of the Gods," said Stella, as we came into the gateway of the garden. "I think the name must have been given to it from its resemblance to the heathen temples. This we may imagine the broken archway to the Egyptian temple Karnak," referring to the perpendicular walls, three hundred feet high, of red and yellow sandstone.

"Then these are the speaking statues of Memnon, whose lips gave forth musical sounds when touched by the rays of the rising sun," said Lady Irving, following out Stella's thought of the heathen temple, as she passed to some forms that seemed weird enough to represent heathen gods.

"And what are these grotesque forms?" asked Melvorne as we came to a group of wind-eroded monuments.

"O, they are the priests, and these strange forms are bearing incense before the god Apis, who stands there in all the dignity of his sacred godship, even to the color," said Stella, pointing to a huge dark image in the corner of a group.

"Pay, what was Apis? This looks much like an ox," said Lollard.

"O, I know," exclaimed Mrs. Lollard. "It was the sacred bull that the Egyptians worshipped."

"To what religion does your immense cube belong? It is large enough for a dwelling house, and so nicely balanced on a point that the weight of a child's finger could seemingly upset it?" I asked.

"That is the sacred seal of Mahomet's faith, only the temple has been removed," said Stella.

"Then those high battlements with broken windows are a part of the Mosque of St. Omar," suggested Lollard.

"This is Buddha, and that the sacred cow," said Lady Irving, going from one statue to another.

"How appropriate it is that the dominant color here should be red, which means passion, as the heathen gods appeal only to the baser sentiments of mankind," said Stella thoughtfully.

"But leave out the thoughts of the heathen gods and view the wonders of the landscape filled with strange colossal images. Here and there a snow-white limestone tower or crag to bring out more vividly the deep rich tints of red and brown, surmounted by the sapphire blue of the heavens above. Under foot the smooth level surface of the valley is carpeted with equally rich tints, made brilliant by mingled green and gray of brass and mosses. And, towering over all, not far away, see the snow clad summit of Pike's Peak. It rears its lofty form, a fitting background for this pantomime in nature," said Melvorne, moved to eloquence by the grandeur of the scene.

Then for a time we all felt the influence of the awful mystery that surrounds this weird and sacred place. With bowed heads and devout hearts we each acknowledged that we were in the presence of the God of Nature!

From the Garden of the Gods we went southward over a beautiful level road between huge bluffs and crags on either side. We drove into the mouth or opening in the mountain called Cheyenne Canyon. This gash in the giant mountain walls seems like a roadway cut into a deep snow-drift, which has become a solid mountain and defies the power of man to move it; while down its farther side comes a dashing, rushing, foaming and roaring waterfall. From the nearly level valley down which the stream flows with gentle movement we can see but three of the seven falls that drop the water from the melted snow into the granite well at the head of the narrow gorge. Going up the gorge to the well is not very difficult.

"The water falls five hundred feet in seven leaps," said Lollard, as we still stood at the mouth of the deep gash in the mountain side.

"Where are the trio?" asked Melvorne as he turned to look for the ladies.

"There they go up the canyon," I said, as we started to overtake them. But they were more spry than we and could skip along over the stones and across the narrow streams with ease.

At last we reached the head of the canyon where the ladies commenced making merry by throwing snowballs at the opposite side of the canyon. By some unaccountable impulse they aimed their mischievous weapons at our heads as we came near to their great amusement and our discomfort.

"Be careful," cried Mrs. Lollard, "or you'll fall into that well of ice cold water," as they gathered fresh handfuls of snow that lay in a mass by the granite wall.

"Why, you said there were seven falls, Lollard, but I can only see three," said Melvorne.

"To see the seven we must climb out of the canyon on the left side, then at a certain place, we can see them all at once."

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"O, look!" cried Mrs. Lollard, "there are the stars!"

"Sure enough the afternoon sun had passed and left the gorge in twilight. "I would like to see the falls," said Lady Irving.

"So would I," cried Stella and Mrs. Lollard with one voice.

"The eye can hardly grasp the vast height. The blaze of light on the red sandstones at the top of the mountains make the dim light down here seem darker by the contrast," said Melvorne, as we commenced to ascend the wild, rocky gorge to get a view of the upper falls.

The ladies were very glad now of the aid of our outstretched hands to help balance them from one shelving rock, tree or fallen log to another. At last we reached the point we sought and were repaid by seeing the seven falls of the little river with its foam and roar, as it leaps in quick succession into the depths below.

"If we could imagine some ivy covered towers made immortal by legendary lore, this would excel in beauty the fastnesses of the Alps," said Lady Irving.

"When I become an authoress I will make this the place from which to send forth thrilling tales of wild Indian maidens and their brave warrior chiefs," said Stella, her cheeks glowing from the vigorous exercise and her eyes sparkling with joyous animation.

"This place will sometime echo with the imagination of a Homer, a Byron, or a Scott," said Melvorne. "It is the very home of romance and poetry!"

Our guide followed us with a dainty knob of which every weary traveler values the value. Seated on a trunk of a fallen tree beside a cool stream in a shady nook we soon emptied the basket and were ready for the descent into the canyon.

Wearily but delighted we reached the valley and returned to our hotel. Notwithstanding the generous lunch we had enjoyed, we were ready to devour the wholesome food spread before us. We were tired enough to rest, but after a little while we met in the parlor where the evening was passed with music and conversation.

CHAPTER XVIII.—PIKE'S PEAK.

Preparations were made and the following morning we gathered with a party of ten or fifteen persons, ready to ascend the little renowned summit of Pike's Peak. In the party was an old man from Vermont, who was making a tour of the West and wanted to accompany us up the mountain. He carried a huge note book as a repository from which he hoped to draw his winter editorials. Being a tall slim man and wearing a hat with a very broad brim, Stella said, his sharp face looked like a "pick ax under an awning." We were much amused as he came from the hotel with an umbrella under one arm and his huge note book under the other, wearing a loose tweed overcoat that scarcely touched him below the shoulders. Then there was a young couple who were very unconsciously telling us that they were "taking in" the beauties of the West as an accompaniment to their honeymoon. We gathered on the steps of the great hotel and as each one mounted a small pony, we started on the Cheyenne road for the trail to the upper world.

We set out on a rapid swinging gallop, but from some unaccountable reason my animal suddenly stopped still, eating grass, and I lay on the ground a few feet away observing my situation. From the

rear of laughter that greeted me I must have performed a most wonderful gymnastic feat. I had hardly recovered my perpendicular when Mr. Editor with his umbrella and note book made the same flying leap and came down to the earth with more haste than elegance.

We remounted and kept our seats after that.

The trail up the mountains was frequently rough and steep. Sometimes we had to stop and let our horses breathe before mounting the steepest places. But we were in no hurry. The scenery was enchanting. Constant surprises burst upon us as we reached one height after another. Yet the longed for peak was always just a little beyond like the famous pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.

We reached the seven lakes and had our lunch. The lakes are picturesque, as such sheets of water are apt to be among the mountains. While we were resting a party of twelve or more passed us coming down. Some of them wore the most haggard expressions. One lady of the party said to Lady Irving, "O madam, take my advice and go down. It is a deadly place up there. If I ever reach the hotel I will never tempt Providence again by starting out on another excursion."</