

The Two Vanrevels

By **BOOTH TARKINGTON**,
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(CONTINUED.)

"It's a wicked cruelty, princess!" exclaimed Mrs. Tanberry. "We want to cheer the poor fellows and help them to be gay, and here do you deliberately plan to make them sick at the thought of leaving the place that holds you! Or have you discovered that there's one poor vagabond of the band getting off without having his heart broken, and made up your mind to do it for him tonight?"

"Is father to go with us?" asked Betty. It was through Mrs. Tanberry that she now derived all information concerning Mr. Carewe, as he had not directly addressed her since the afternoon when he discovered her reading the Journal's extra.

"No; we are to meet him there. He seems rather pleasant than usual this evening," remarked Mrs. Tanberry hopefully as she retired.

"Den we mus' git ready to share big trouble tomorrow!" commented the kneeling Mamie, with a giggle.

Alas, poor adoring servitress, she received a share unto herself that very evening, for her young mistress, usually as amiable as a fair summer sky, fidgeted, grumbled, found nothing well done and was never two minutes in the same mind. After donning the selected dress, she declared it a fright, tried two others, abused each roundly, dismissed her almost weeping hand-maiden abruptly and again put on the first. Sitting down to the mirror, she spent a full hour over the arrangement of her hair.

When Mrs. Tanberry came in to tell her that Nelson was at the block with the carriage Miss Betty did not turn, and the elder lady stopped on the threshold and gave a quick, asthmatic gasp of delight.

"Oh," said Mrs. Tanberry, "you make me want to be a man! I'd pick you up and run to the north pole, where no one could ever follow. And in tell you that it hurts not to throw my arms round you and kiss you, but you're so exquisite I don't want to touch you!"

"Dance wid de han'somdest," screamed Mamie, pursuing uproariously to see the last of her as she jumped into the carriage, "bow to de wittiest an' kiss de one you love de best!"

"That will be you!" said Miss Betty to Mrs. Tanberry and kissed the good lady again.

CHAPTER XVI.

IT is a matter not of notoriety, but of the happiest celebrity, that Mrs. Tanberry danced that night; and not only that she danced, but that she waltzed. To the lot of Tappingham Marsh (whom she pronounced the most wheedling vagabond, next to Cralley Gray, of her acquaintance) it fell to persuade her; and, after walking a quadrille with the elder Chenoweth, she waltzed with Tappingham. More extraordinary to relate, she danced down both her partner and the music. Thereupon did Mr. Bareaud, stung with envy, dare emulation and essay a schottische with Miss Trixie Chenoweth, performing marvelously well for many delectable turns before he unfortunately fell down. It was a night when a sculptured god would have danced on his pedestal; June, but not overwarm, balm in the air and rose leaves on the breeze; and even Minerva's great heels might have marked the time that orchestra kept. Be sure they waltzed again to "Those Endearing Young Charms."

Oh, the heart that has truly loved never forgets.
But as truly loves on to the close,
As the sunflower turns on her god when he sets
The same look that she gave when he rose.

Three of the volunteers were recipient in their regimentals—Mr. Marsh (who had been elected captain of the new company to succeed Vanrevel) and Will Cummings and Jean Madrillon, the lieutenants. This glory was confined to the officers, who had ordered their uniforms at home, for the privates and noncommissioned officers were to receive theirs at the state rendezvous. However, although this gala adornment was limited to the three gentlemen mentioned, their appearance added "an indescribable air of splendor and pathos to the occasion," to quote Mr. Cummings once more. A fourth citizen of the town who might have seized upon this opportunity to display himself as a soldier neglected to take advantage of it and stole in quietly toward the last in his ordinary attire, leaving his major's uniform folded on a chair in his own room. The flag was to be presented to the volunteers at the close of the evening,

and Tom came for that—so he claimed to his accusing soul.

He entered unobserved and made his way, keeping close to the wall, to where Mrs. Bareaud sat, taking a chair at her side, but Robert Carewe, glancing thither by chance, saw him and changed countenance for an instant. Mr. Carewe composed his features swiftly, excused himself with elaborate courtesy from Miss Chenoweth, with whom he was talking, and crossed the room to a corner near his enemy. Presently, as the music ceased, the volunteers were bidden to come forward, whereupon Tom left Mrs. Bareaud and began to work his way down the room. Groups were forming and breaking up in the general movement of the crowd, and the dissolving of one brought him face to face with Elizabeth Carewe, who was moving slowly in the opposite direction, a small flock of suitors in her train.

The confrontation came so suddenly and so unexpectedly that before either was aware they looked squarely into each other's eyes full and straight, and both stopped instantly, as though transfixed, Miss Betty leaving a sentence forever half complete. There was a fierce, short vocal sound from the crowd behind Vanrevel, but no one noticed Mr. Carewe, and then Tom bowed

gravely, as in apology for blocking the way, and passed on.

Miss Betty began to talk again, much at random, with a vivacity too greatly exaggerated to be genuine, while the high color went from her cheeks and left her pale. Nothing could have enraged her more with herself than the consciousness, now suddenly strong within her, that the encounter had a perceptible effect upon her. What power had this man to make her manner strained and mechanical? What right had his eyes always to stir her as they did?

Ah, that other should have come, if only to stand between her and this tall hypocrite whose dark glance had such strength to disturb her. What lies that gaze contained, all in the one flash—the strange pretense of comprehending her gently, but completely—a sad compassion, too, and with it a look of farewell, seeming to say, "Once more I have come for this—and just 'Goodby!'" For she knew that he was going with the others, going perhaps forever, only the day after tomorrow—then she would see him no more and be free of him. Let the day after tomorrow come soon! Miss Betty hated herself for understanding the adieu, and hated herself more because she could not be sure that, in the startled moment of meeting before she collected herself, she had let it go unanswered.

She had done more than that. Without knowing it, she had bent her head to his bow, and Mr. Carewe had seen both the salutation and the look.

The young men were gathered near the orchestra, and, to the hilarious strains of "Yankee Doodle," the flag they were to receive for their regiment was borne down the room by the sisters and sweethearts who had made it, all of whom were there except Fanchon Bareaud. Cralley had persuaded her to surrender the flag for the sake of spending this evening, next to his last in Rouen, at home alone with him.

The elder Chenoweth made the speech of presentation—that is, he made part of it before he broke down, for his son stood in the ranks of the devoted band. Until this incident occurred all had gone trippingly, for every one had tried to put the day after tomorrow from his mind. Perhaps there might not have been so many tears even now if the young men had not stood together so smilingly to receive their gift. It was seeing them so gay and confident, so strong in their youth and so unselfish of purpose. It was this and the feeling that all of them must suffer and some of them die before they came back, so that when Mr. Chenoweth, choking in his loftiest flight, came to a full stop, and without disguise buried his face in his handkerchief, Mrs. Tanberry, the apostle of gayety, openly sobbed. Chenoweth, without more ado, carried the flag over to Tappingham Marsh, whom Vanrevel directed to receive it, and Tappingham thanked the donors without many words, because there were not then many at his command.

Miss Carewe had been chosen to sing "The Star Spangled Banner," and she stepped out a little from the crowd to face the young man as the orchestra sounded the first chord. She sang in a full, clear voice, but when the volunteers saw that as she sang the tears were streaming down her cheeks in spite of the brave voice they began to choke with the others. If Miss Betty Carewe found them worth weeping

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for, they could afford to cry a little for themselves. Yet they joined the chorus nobly and raised the roof with the ringing song, sending the flamboyant, proud old words thunderously to heaven.

That was not the last song of the night. General Trumble and Mr. Chenoweth had invited their young friends to attend, after the ball, a collation which they chose to call a supper, but which, to accord with the hour, might more aptly have been designated a breakfast. To afford a private retreat for the scene of this celebration they had borrowed the offices of Gray & Vanrevel, and Cralley hospitably announced that any guest was welcome to stay for a year or two, since probably neither of the firm would have need of an office for at least that length of time. Nine men gathered about the table which replaced Tom's workaday old desk—the two Chenoweths, Eugene Madrillon, Marsh, Jefferson Bareaud, the stout general, Tom Vanrevel, Cralley and Will Cummings—the editor coming in a little late, but rubbing his hands cheerfully over what he declared was to be the last column from his pen to rear its length on the Journal's front page for many a long day—a description of the presentation of the flag.

This convivial party made merry and tried to forget that most of them had "been mighty teary," as Marsh said, an hour earlier, while Mr. Chenoweth sat with his hand on his son's shoulder, unconsciously most of the time, apologetically removing it when he observed it. Many were the witticisms concerning the difference in rank henceforth to be observed between the young men, as Tom was now a major, Marsh a captain, Will Cummings a second lieutenant and the rest mere privates, except Cralley, who was a corporal. Nevertheless, though the board was festive, it was somewhat subdued and absent until they came to the toasts.

It was Tappingham who proposed Miss Betty Carewe. "I know Tom Vanrevel will understand—nay, I know he's man enough to join us," said Marsh as he rose. "Why shouldn't I say that we may hail ourselves as patriots, indeed, since at the call of our country we depart from the town which is this lady's home and at the trumpet's sound resign the gracious blessing of seeing her day by day, and why shouldn't we admit loyally and openly that it is her image alone which shines in the hearts of most of us here?"

And no man arose to contradict that speech, which appears to have rung true, seeing that four of those present had proposed to her again that same evening.

"So I give you," cried Tappingham gallantly, "the health of Miss Betty Carewe, the loveliest rose of our bouquet! May she remember us when we come home!"

They rose and drank it with a shout. But Tom Vanrevel, not setting down his cup, went to the window and threw wide the shutters, letting in a ruddy shaft of the morning sun, so that as he stood in the strong glow he looked like a man carved out of red gold. He lifted his glass not toward the table and his companions while they stared at him, surprised, but toward the locusts of Carewe street.

"To Miss Betty Carewe," he said, "the finest flower of them all! May she remember those who never come home!"

And without pausing he lifted his rich baritone in an old song that had been vastly popular with the young men of Rouen ever since the night of Miss Betty's debut. They had hummed it as they went about their daily work, they had whistled it on the streets, they had drifted into dreams at night with the sound of it still chiming in their ears, and now with one accord as they stood gathered together for the last time in Rouen they joined Tom Vanrevel and sang it again. And the eyes of Cralley Gray rested very gently upon his best friend as they sang:

"Believe me, if all those endearing young charms,
Which I gaze on so fondly today,
Were to change by tomorrow and fleet
From my arms
Like fairy gifts fading away,
Thou wouldst still be adored as this moment thou art.
Let thy loveliness fade as it will,
And around the dear ruin each wish of my heart
Would intwine itself verdantly still."

CHAPTER XVII.

IT was the misfortune of Mr. Cummings' final literary offering to annoy one of the editor's friends. The Journal was brought to the new corporal at noon, while he was considering whether he should rise from his couch or sleep another hour. Reclining among his pillows, he glanced through Cummings' description with the subdued



"To Miss Betty Carewe."

giggle he always had for the good William's style, but as his eye fell upon one paragraph he started, sat upright and proceeded to read the passage several times with anxious attention:

"Only two or three sources of regret occurred to mar the delight (in which young and old participated) of that festive and dazzling scene. One was the absence of Miss Fanchon Bareaud, one of the donors; another, that of Corporal Gray; a third was the excessive modesty of Major Vanrevel, who, although present at the time, refused to receive the ladies' sumptuous offering and insisted that Captain Marsh was the proper person to do the honors, to which the latter reluctantly, though

gracefully, consented. Also, we were sorry that the major appeared in citizen's dress, as all were anxious to witness him in his uniform. However, in our humble judgment he will be compelled by etiquette to don it this afternoon to receive the officers of the regular army, who will arrive by the stage about 5 o'clock, it is expected, to inspect the company and swear them into the service of the federal government at the courthouse. We, for one, have little doubt that, owing to the major's well known talent in matters of apparel, his appearance will far eclipse in brilliancy that of his fellow officers."

Cralley dressed slowly, returning to the paper now and then with a perturbed countenance. How would Miss Betty explain this paragraph to herself, and how account for the fact that she had not seen Cralley, how for the fact that she had seen Tom? It seemed unlikely that she could have overlooked the latter—Tom was one of those whom everybody saw wherever he went. And what inquiries would she make? For Cralley had no means of knowing that she would not see the Journal. Tomorrow he would be gone—it would all be over—but he wanted this last day to run smoothly. What wild hopes he had of things that should happen when they all came marching home no one can say; even if it were not to be doubted that Cralley ever entertained hopes of any kind whatever, since to hope is to bestow thought upon the future.

But, however affairs ran with him so far as hope was concerned, he seldom lacked an idea, and one came to him presently, a notion that put the frown to rout and brought the old smile to his lips, his smile of the world-worn and tolerant prelate. He flicked the paper lightly from him, and it sped across the room like a big bird in awkward flight. For he knew how to pre-

serve his last day as he wished and to make all smooth.

He finished his toilet with particular care, took a flower from a vase on his table, placed it in his coat and went down to the dusty street, where everything was warm and bright with summer. It was joy to be alive; there was wine enough in the air, and Cralley made up his mind not to take a drink that day—the last day! The last day! The three words kept ringing through his head like a minor phrase from a song. Tomorrow at noon they would be churning down the river, and this was the last day—the last day!

"Still not too late to make another friend at home," he said, stopping to pat the head of a mangy street cur that came crouching and wabbling toward him like a staveless little keg worried by scurries of wind. Dogs and children always fell in love with Cralley at first sight, and he never failed to receive them in the spirit of their approach. Now the mongrel, at his touch, immediately turned himself over and lay upon the pavement with all paws in air, to say: "Great lord, magnificent in the graciousness which deigns to cast a glimpse upon this abject cluster of ribs, I perceive that your heart is too gentle to kick me in my present helplessness. Yet do with me as you will."

(To be Continued)