

The Two Vanrevels

By BOOTH TARKINGTON.

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(CONTINUED.)

Miss Betty had an impression that her grandmother's art of portraiture would have been more successful with the profile than the "full face." Nevertheless, nothing could be more clearly indicated than that the hair of M. Melihac was very yellow and his short, huge laped waistcoat white, striped with scarlet. An enormous cravat covered his chin; the heavy collar of his yellow coat rose behind his ears, while its tails fell to his ankles, and the tight trousers of white and yellow stripes were tied with white ribbons about the middle of the calf. He wore white stockings and gold buckled yellow shoes and on the back of his head a jauntily cocked black hat. Miss Betty innocently wondered why his letters did not speak of Petion, of Vergniaud or of Dumoriez, since in the historical novels which she read the hero's lot was inevitably linked with that of every one of importance in his generation. Yet Georges appeared to have been unacquainted with these personages. Robespierre being the only name of consequence mentioned in his letters, and then it appeared in much the same fashion practiced by her father in alluding to the governor of the state, who had the misfortune to be unpopular with Mr. Carewe. But this did not dim her great-uncle's luster in Miss Betty's eyes or lessen for her the pathetic romance of the smile he wore.

Beholding this smile, one remembered the end to which his light footsteps had led him, and it was unavoidable to picture him left lying in the empty street behind the heels of the flying crowd, carefully forming that same smile on his lips and taking much pride in passing with some small, cynical speech, murmured to himself, concerning the futility of a gentleman's getting shot by his friends for merely being present to applaud them. So, fancying him thus with his yellow hair, his scarlet striped waistcoat and his tragically, the young girl felt a share of family greatness or at least of picturesque descent to her, and she smiled sadly back upon the smile in the picture and dreamed about its original night after night.

Whether or no another figure, that of a dark young man in a white hat, with a white kitten etching his wrist in red, found place in her dreams at this period it is impossible to determine. She did not see him again. It is quite another thing, hazardous to venture, to state that he did not see her. At all events, it is certain that many people who had never beheld her were talking of her; that Rouen was full of contention concerning her beauty and her gift of music, for a song can be heard through an open window. And how did it happen that Craley Gray knew that it was Miss Carewe's habit to stroll in her garden for half an hour or so each evening before retiring and that she went to mass every morning soon after sunrise? Craley Gray never rose at or near sunrise in his life, though he sometimes beheld it from another point of view, as the end of the evening. It appears that some one must have told him.

One night when the moon lay white on the trees and housetops Miss Betty paused in her evening promenade and seated herself upon a bench on the borders of the garden, wrought upon by the tender incentive to sighs and melancholy which youth in loneliness finds in a loveliness of the earth, for what reason she could not have told, since she was without care or sorrow that she knew except the French revolution, yet tears shone upon the long lashes. She shook them off and looked up with a sudden odd consciousness. The next second she sprang to her feet with a gasp and a choked outcry, her hands pressed to her breast.

Ten paces in front of her a gap in the shrubbery where tall trees rose left a small radiant area of illumination like that of a limelight in a theater, its brilliancy intensified by the dark foliage behind. It was open to view only from the bench by which she stood, and appeared, indeed, like the stage of a little theater, a stage occupied by a bizarre figure. For, in the center of this shining patch, with the light strong on his face, was standing a fair haired young man dressed in a yellow coat, a scarlet and white striped waistcoat, wearing a jauntily cocked black hat on his head. And even to the last detail, the ribbon laces above the ankle and the gold buckled shoes, he was the sketch of Georges Melihac sprung into life.

About this slender figure there hung a wan sweetness like a fine mist, almost an ethereality in that light; yet in

the pale face lurked something reckless, something of the actor, too; and, though his smile was gentle and wistful, there was a twinkle behind it not seen at first, something amused and impish; a small surprise underneath, like a flea in a rose jar.

Fixed to the spot by this apparition, Miss Betty stood wildly staring, her straining eyelids showing the white above and below the large brown iris. Her breath came faster and deeper until between her parted lips it became vocal in a quick sound like a sob. At that he spoke.

"Forgive me!" The voice was low, vibrant and so exceedingly musical that he might have been accused of



"Don't come near!" she gasped.

coolly selecting his best tone; and it became only sweeter when, even more softly, in a semiwhisper of almost crucial pleading, he said, "Ah, don't go away!"

In truth she could not go. She had been too vitally stirred. She began to tremble excessively and sank back upon the bench, motioning him away with vague gestures of her shaking hands.

This was more than the incredible had counted upon and far from his desires. He started forward, with an exclamation.

"Don't come near!" she gasped. "Who are you? Go away!"

"Give me one second to explain," he began, but with the instant reassurance of this beginning she cut him off short, her fears dispelled by his commonplace. Nay, indignation displaced them so quickly that she fairly flashed up before him to her full height.

"You did not come in by the gate!" she cried. "What do you mean by coming here in that dress? What right have you in my garden?"

"Just one word," he begged quickly, but very gently. "You'd allow a street beggar that much!"

She stood before him panting and, as he thought, glorious in her flush of youth and anger. Tom Vanrevel had painted her incoherently, but richly in spite of that, his whole heart being in the portrait, and Craley Gray had smiled at what he deemed the exaggeration of an ordinarily unimpressible man who had fallen in love "at first sight," yet in the presence of the reality the incredible decided that Tom's colors had been gray and humble.

"If you have anything to say for yourself, say it quickly!" said Miss Betty.

"You were singing a while ago," he answered somewhat huskily, "and I stopped on the street to listen; then I came here to be nearer. The spell of your voice"—He broke off abruptly to change the word. "The spell of the song came over me—it is my dearest favorite—so that I stood afterward in a sort of trance, only hearing again in the silence 'The stolen heart, like the gathered rose, will bloom but for a day!' I did not see you until you came to the bench. You must believe me, I would not have frightened you for anything in the world."

"Why are you wearing that dress?" He laughed and pointed to where, behind him on the ground, lay a long gray cloak, upon which had been tossed a white mask. "I'm on my way to the masquerade," he answered, with an airy gesture. "I'm an incredible, you see, and I had the costume made from my recollection of a sketch of your great-uncle. I saw it a long time ago in your library."

Miss Carewe's accustomed poise was quite recovered—indeed, she was astonished to discover a distinct trace of disappointment that the brilliant ap-

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parition must offer so fame an explanation. What he said was palpably the truth. There was a masquerade that night, she knew, at the Madrilons', a little way up Carewe street, and her father had gone an hour earlier, a blue domino over his arm.

The incredible was a person of almost magical perceptiveness. He felt the let-down immediately and feared a failure. This would not do. The attitude of tension between them must be renewed at once. "You'll forgive me?" he began in a quickly impassioned tone. "It was only after you sang a dream possessed me, and"—

"I cannot stay to talk with you," Miss Betty interrupted and added with a straightforwardness which made him afraid she would prove lamentably direct, "I do not know you."

She turned toward the house, whereupon he gave a little pathetic exclamation of pleading in a voice that was masterly, being as sincere as it was

musical, and he took a few leaning steps toward her, both hands outstretched.

"One moment more!" he cried as she turned again to him. "It may be the one chance of my life to speak with you. Don't deny me this. All the rest will meet you when the happy evening comes, will dance with you, talk with you, see you when they like, listen to you sing. I alone must hover about the gates or steal like a thief into your garden to hear you from a distance. Listen to me just this once for a moment."

"I cannot listen," she said firmly, and with a whisk of her skirts and a foot-fall on the gravel path she was gone. He stood dumfounded, poor comedian, having come to play the chief role, but to find the scene taken out of his hands.

CHAPTER III.

THOSE angels appointed to be guardians of the merry people of Rouen, poisoning one night be-

tween earth and stars, discovered a single brilliant and resonant spot, set in the midst of the dark, quiet town like a jeweled music box on a black cloth, for that night was the beginning of Miss Betty's famous career as the belle of Rouen and was the date from which strangers were to hear of her as "the beautiful Miss Carewe" until "beautiful" was left off, visitors to the town being supposed to have heard at least that much before they came.

There had been much discussion of her, though only one or two had caught glimpses of her, but most of the gallants appeared to agree with Craley Gray, who aired his opinion in an exceedingly casual way at the little club on Main street. Mr. Gray held that when the daughter of a man as rich as Bob Carewe was heralded as a beauty the chances were that she would prove disappointing, and, for his part, he was not even interested enough to attend and investigate. So he was going down the river in a canoe and preferred the shyness of bass to that of a girl of eighteen just from the convent, he said. Tom Vanrevel was not present on the occasion of these remarks, and the general concurrence with Craley may be suspected as a purely verbal one, since when the evening came two of the most enthusiastic dancers and lovers of the town, the handsome Tappingham Marsh and that doughty ex-dragon and Indian fighter, stout old General Trumble, were upon the field before the enemy appeared—that is to say, they were in the new ballroom before their host; indeed, the musicians had not arrived, and Nelson, an aged negro servant, was engaged in lighting the house.

The crafty pair had planned this early descent with a view to monopoly by right of priority in case the game proved worth the candle, and they were leaning effectively against the little railing about the musicians' platform when Mr. Carewe entered the room with his daughter on his arm.

She was in white touched with countless small lavender flowers. There

were rows and rows of wonderful silk and lace flounces on her skirt, and her fan hung from a rope of great pearls. Ah, hideous, blue rough cloth of the convent, forgotten, but laid aside forever, what a chrysalis you were!

Tappingham twitched his companion's sleeve, but the general was already posing, and neither heard the words of presentation, because Miss Betty gave each of them a quick look, then smiled upon them as they bowed. The slayers were prostrated before their prey. Never were lady killers more instantaneously tamed and subjugated by the power of the feminine eye. Will Cummings came in soon, and, almost upon his heels, Eugene Madrilon and young Frank Chenoweth. No others appeared for half an hour, and the five gentlemen looked at one another aside, each divining his own diplomacy in his fellow's eye, and each laboriously explaining to the others his own mistake in regard to the hour designated upon Mr. Carewe's cards of invitation. This small embarrassment, however, did not prevent General Trumble and young Mr. Chenoweth from coming to high words over Miss Carewe's little gilt filigree "programme" of dances.

(To be Continued)

Resume Athletic Relations.

Lincoln, Feb. 13.—The University of Kansas basketball team defeated the Nebraska five by a score of 37 to 17. The game marked the resumption of athletic relations between the two universities, broken off two years ago.

Cracksmen Blow Open Postoffice Safe.

Lincoln, Feb. 12.—Cracksmen blew open the safe of the postoffice at College View, the Adventist college suburb of Lincoln, and secured \$700 worth of stamps and \$3 in money. The safe was blown to pieces and the building damaged. Bloodhounds are on the trail of the robbers, who are thought to be Lincoln men.