The Two Vanrevels

By BOOTH TARKINGTON,
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(CONTINUED.)

It may be not untimely to remark also of these five redoubtable beaux that during the evening it occurred to every one of them to be glad that Crailey Gray was betrothed to Fanchon Bareaud, and that he was down on the Rouen river with a canoe, a rod and a tent. Nay, without more words, to declare the truth in regard to Crailey, they felt greater security in his absence from the field than in his betrothal. As Mr. Chenoweth, a youth as open as out of doors both in countenance and mind, observed plaintively to Tappingham Marsh in a corner, while they watched Miss Betty's lavender flowers miraculously swirling through a quadrille, "Crailey, you know—well, Crailey's been engaged before!" It was not Mr. Chenoweth's habit to disguise his apprehensions, and Crailey Gray would not fish for bass forever.

The same Chenoweth was he who, maddened by the general's triumphantly familiar way of toying with Miss Betty's fan between two dances, attempted to propose to her during the sunrise waltz. Having sung "Oh, believe me!" in her ear as loudly as he could, he expressed the wish, quite as loudly, "that this waltz might last for always!"

That was the seventh time it had been said to Betty during the night, and, though Mr. Chenoweth's predecessors had revealed their desires in a guise lacking this prodigious artlessness, she already possessed no novel acquaintance with the exclamation, but she made no comment. Her partner's style was not a stimulant to repartee. "It would be heaven," he amplified earnestly; "it would be heaven to dance with you forever—on a desert isle where the others couldn't come!" he finished with sudden acerbity as his eye caught the general's.

He proceeded, and only the cessation of the music aided Miss Carewe in stopping the declaration before it was altogether out, and at that point Frank's own father came to her rescue, though in a fashion little saving of her confusion. The elder Chenoweth was one of the gallant and kindly southern colony that made it natural for Rouen always to speak of Miss Carewe as Miss Betty. He was a handsome old fellow, whose hair, long mustache and imperial were as white as he was proud of them, a Virginian with the admirable southern fearlessness of being thought sentimental. Mounting a chair with complete dignity, he proposed the health of his young hostess. He made a speech of some length, pronouncing himself quite as hopelessly in love with his old friend's daughter as all could see his own son was, and wishing her long life and prosperity, with many allusions to fragrant bowers and the muses.

It made Miss Betty happy, but it was rather trying, too, for she could only stand with downcast eyes before them all, trembling a little, and receiving a mixed impression of Mr. Chenoweth's remarks, catching fragments here and there. As the old gentleman finished, Fanchon Bareaud, kissing her hand to Betty, began to sing, and they all joined in, lifting their glasses to the blushing and happy girl clinging to her father's arm:

"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."

They were happy people who had not learned to be self conscious enough to fear doing a pretty thing openly without mocking themselves for it, and it was a brave circle they made about Betty Carewe, the charming faces of the women and their fine furbelows, handsome men and tall, all so gay, so cheerily smiling and yet so earnest in their welcome to her. No one was afraid to "let out" his voice; their song went full and strong over the waking town, and when it was finished the ball was over too.

The veranda and the path to the gate became like tropic gardens, the fair colors of the women's dresses, ballooning in the early breeze, making the place seem strewn with giant blossoms. They all went away at the same time, those in carriages calling farewells to each other and to the little processions departing on foot in different directions to homes near by. The sound of the voices and laughter drew away, slowly died out altogether, and the silence of the street was strange and unfamiliar to Betty. She went to the hedge and watched the musicians, who were the last to go, until they passed from sight—little black toilsome figures, carrying grotesque black boxes. While she could still see them it seemed to her that her ball was not quite over, and she wished to hold the least speck of it as long as she could, but when they had disappeared she faced the truth with a deep sigh. The long, glorious night was finished indeed.

What she needed now was another girl. The two would have gone to Betty's room and danced it all over again

Proposed the health of his young hostess.

until noon, but she had only her father. She found him contentedly smoking a cigar upon the veranda, so she seated herself timidly, nevertheless with a hopeful glance at him, on the steps at his feet, and as she did so he looked down upon her with something more akin to geniality than anything she had ever seen in his eye before. They did not know each other very well, and she often doubted that they would ever become intimate. This morning, for the first time, she was conscious of a sense of warmth and gratitude toward him. The elaborate fashion in which he had introduced her to his friends made it appear possible that he liked her, for he had forgotten nothing, and to remember everything in this case was to be lavish, which has often the appearance of generosity.

And yet there had been a lack. Some small thing she had missed, though she was not entirely sure that she identified it. But the lack had not been in her father or in anything he had done. Then, too, there was something so unexpectedly human and pleasant in his not going to bed at once, but remaining to smoke on the veranda at this hour that she gave him credit for a little of her own excitement, innocently fancying that he also might feel the need of a companion with whom to talk over the brilliant passages of the night. And a moment ensued when she debated taking his hand. She was too soon glad that her intuition forbade the demonstration.

"It was all so beautiful, papa," she said timidly. "I have no way to tell you how I thank you."

"You may do that," he replied evenly, with no unkindness, with no kindness either, in the level of his tone, "by never dancing again more than twice with one man in one evening."

"I think I should much prefer not myself," she returned, lifting her head to face him gravely. "I believe if I cared to dance more than once with one I should like to dance all of them with him."

Mr. Carewe frowned. "I trust that you discovered none last night whom you wished to honor with your entire program.me."

"No," she laughed, "not last night."

Her father tossed away his cigar abruptly. "Is it too much to hope," he inquired, "that when you discover a gentleman with whom you desire to waltz all night you will omit to mention the fact to him?"

There was a brief flash of her eye as she recalled her impulse to take his hand, but she immediately looked at him with such complete seriousness that he feared his irony had been thrown away.

"I'll remember not to mention it," she answered. "I'll tell him you told me not to."

"I think you may retire now," said Mr. Carewe sharply.

She rose from the steps, went to the door, then turned at the threshold. "Were all your friends here, papa?"

"Do you think that every ninny who gabbled in my house last night was my friend?" he said angrily. "There was one friend of mine, Mrs. Tanqueray, who wasn't here because she is out of town, but I do not imagine that you are inquiring about women. You mean was every unmarried male idiot who could afford a swallowtailed coat and a clean pair of gloves cavorting about the place? Yes, miss, they were all here except two, and one of those is a fool, the other a knave."

"Can't I know the fool?" she asked eagerly.

"I rejoice to find them so rare in your experience!" he retorted. "This one is out of town, though I have no doubt you will see him sufficiently often when he returns. His name is Crailey Gray, and he is to marry Fanchon Bareaud—if he remembers!"

"And the knave?"

"Is one!" Carewe shut his teeth with a venomous snap, and his whole face reddened suddenly. "I'll mention this fellow once—now," he said, speaking each word with emphasis. "His name is Vanrevel. You see that gate, you see the line of my property there. The man himself as well as every other person in the town remembers well that the last time I spoke to him it was to tell him that if he ever set foot on ground of mine I'd shoot him down, and he knows, and they all know, I shall keep my word! Elsewhere I told him that for the sake of public peace I should ignore him. I do. You will see him everywhere, but it will not be difficult. No one will have the hardihood to present him to my daughter. The quarrel between us"— Mr. Carewe broke off for a moment, his hands clinching the arms of his chair, while he swallowed with difficulty, as though he choked upon some acrid bolus, and he was so strongly agitated by his own mention of his enemy that he controlled himself by a painful effort of his will. "The quarrel between us is political—and personal. You will remember."

"I shall remember," she answered in a rather frightened voice.

It was long before she fell asleep. "I alone must hover about the gates or steal into your garden like a thief," the incroyable had said. "The last time I spoke to him it was to tell him that if he ever set foot on ground of mine I'd shoot him down!" had been her father's declaration. And Mr. Carewe had spoken with the most undeniable air of meaning what he said. Yet she knew that the incroyable would come again.

Also, with hot cheeks pressed into her pillow, Miss Betty had identified the young man in the white hat, that dark person whose hand she had far too impetuously seized in both of hers. Aha! It was this gentleman who looked into people's eyes and stammered so sincerely over a pretty speech that you almost believed him; it was he who was to marry Fanchon Bareaud, "if he remembers!" No wonder Fanchon had been in such a hurry to get him away. "If he remembers!" Such was that young man's character, was it? Miss Carewe laughed aloud to her pillow, for was one to guess the reason also of his not having come to her ball? Had the poor man been commanded to be "out of town?"

Then, remembering the piquant and generous face of Fanchon, Betty clinched her fingers tightly and crushed the imp who had suggested the unworthy thought, crushed him to a wretched pulp and threw him out of the window. He immediately sneaked in by the back way, for, in spite of her victory, she still felt a little sorry for poor Fanchon.

CHAPTER IV.

If it be true that love is the great incentive to the useless arts, the number of gentlemen who became poets for the sake of Miss Betty Carewe need not be considered extraordinary. Of all that was written of her dancing, Tom Vanrevel's lines, "I Danced With Her Beneath the Lights" (which he certainly had not done when he wrote them), were perhaps next to Crailey Gray's in merit, though Tom burned his rhymes after reading them to Crailey.

As Crailey Gray never danced with Miss Carewe, it is somewhat singular that she should have been the inspiration of his swinging verses in waltz measure, "Heartstrings on a Violin," the sense of which was that when a violin had played for her dancing the instrument should be shattered as wineglasses are after a great toast. However, no one except the author himself knew that Betty was the subject, for Crailey certainly did not mention it to Miss Bareaud nor to his best friend, Vanrevel.

It was to some degree a strange comradeship between these two young men; their tastes led them so often in opposite directions. They had rooms together over their offices in the "Madrillon block" on Main street, and the lights shone late from their windows every night in the year. Sometimes that would mean only that the two friends were talking, for they never reached a silent intimacy, but, even after several years of companionship, were rarely seen together when not in interested, often eager, conversation, so that people wondered what in the world they still found to say to each other. But many a night the late shining lamp meant that Tom sat alone, with a brief or a book, or wooed the lorn hours with his magical guitar, for he never went to bed until the other came home. And if daylight came without Crailey, Vanrevel would go out, yawning mightily, to look for him, and when there was no finding him Tom would come back sleepless to the day's work.

To the vision of the lookers on in Rouen, quiet souls who hovered along the walls at merrymakings and cheerfully counted themselves spectators at the play, Crailey Gray held the center of the stage and was the chief comedian of the place. Wit, poet and scapegrace, the small society sometimes seemed the mere background set for his performances, spectacles which he also enjoyed, and from the best seat in the house, for he was not content as the actor, but must be the prince in the box as well.

His friendship for Tom Vanrevel was in a measure that of the vine for the oak. He was full of levities at Tom's expense, which the other bore with a grin of sympathetic comprehension or at long intervals returned upon Crailey with devastating effect. Vanrevel was the one steadying thing in his life and at the same time the only one of the young men upon whom he did not have an almost mesmeric influence. In good truth, Crailey was the ringleader in all the deviltries of the town and had been so long in the habit of following every impulse, no matter how mad, that he enjoyed an almost perfect immunity from condemnation, and, whatever his deeds, Rouen had learned to say with a chuckle that it was "only Crailey Gray again."

Now and then he would spend several days in the offices of Gray & Vanrevel, attorneys and counselors at law, wearing an air of unassailable virtue, though he did not far overstate the case when he said, "Tom does all the work and gives me all the money not to bother him when he's getting up a case."

The working member of the firm got up cases to notable effect, and few lawyers in the state enjoyed having Tom Vanrevel on the other side. There was nothing about him of the floridity prevalent at that time; he withered "oratory" before the court; he was the foe of jury pathos, and, despising noise and the habitual voice dip at the end of a sentence, was nevertheless at times an almost fearfully effective orator. So by degrees the firm of Gray & Vanrevel, young as it was and in spite of the idle apprentice, had grown to be the most prosperous in the district. For this eminence Crailey was never accused of assuming the credit. Nor did he ever miss an opportunity of making known how much he owed to his partner. What he owed, in brief, was everything. How well Vanrevel worked was demonstrated every day, but how hard he worked only Crailey knew. The latter had grown to depend upon him for even his political beliefs and lightly followed his partner into abolitionism, though that was to risk unpopularity, bitter hatred and worse. Fortunately on certain occasions Vanrevel had made himself, if not his creed, respected, at least so far that there was no longer danger of mob violence for an abolitionist in Rouen. He was a cool headed young man ordinarily and possessed of an elusive forcefulness not to be trifled with, though he was a quiet man and had what they called a "fine manner," and, not in the latter, but in his dress, there was an echo of the beau, which afforded Mr. Gray a point of attack for sallies of wit.

(To be Continued.)

STOCKMEN SEE PRESIDENT.

Roosevelt Assures Visitors He is In Sympathy With Cattle Interests.

Washington, Feb. 20.—Congressman Kinkaid presented to the president and also to Secretary of the Interior Hitchcock, Henry Reynolds of Chadron and C. H. Cornell of Valentine, representing the Nebraska live stock interests that is moving for a leasing bill. They discussed the matter briefly with the president and at more length with the secretary. The president assured them that he is fully in sympathy with the attitude of the Nebraska cattle interests, which is indeed the attitude of stock interests generally throughout the grazing country, in advocacy of a proper leasing bill. He was not, of course, able to discuss details. He gave gratifying assurances that his moral support will be with the Nebraska men.