

The Two Vanrevels

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CHAPTER I.

IT was long ago, in the days when men sighed when they fell in love, when people danced by candle and lamp, and did dance, too, instead of solemnly gliding about; in that mellow time so long ago when the young were romantic and summer was roses and wine, old Carewe brought his lovely daughter home from the convent to wreck the hearts of the youth of Rouen.

That was not a far journey; only an afternoon's drive through the woods and by the river in an April long ago, Miss Betty's happy carriage, strapped behind the great lumbering carriage, her guitar on the front seat half buried under a mound of bouquets and oddly shaped little bundles, farewell gifts of her comrades and the good sisters. In her left hand she clutched a small lace handkerchief, with which she now and then touched her eyes, brimmed with the parting from Sister Cecilia, Sister Mary Hazlede, the old stone steps and all the girls, but for every time that she lifted the dainty kerchief to brush away the edge of a tear she took a deep breath of the western woodland air and smiled at least twice, for the years of strict inclosure within St. Mary's walls and still gardens were finished and done with, and at last the many colored world flashed and danced in a mystery before her. This mystery was brilliant to the convent girl because it contained men. She was eager to behold it.

They rumbled into town after sunset in the fair twilight, the dogs barking before them, and every one would have been surprised to know that Tom Vanrevel, instead of Mr. Crailley Gray, was the first to see her. By the merest accident Tom was strolling near the Carewe place at the time, and when the carriage swung into the gates, with rattle and clink and clouds of dust at the finish, it was not too soon for Tom to catch something more than a glimpse of a gray skirt behind a mound of flowers and of a charming face with parted lips and dark eyes beneath the scintille of an enormous bonnet. It happened—perhaps it is more accurate to say that Tom thought it happened—that she was just clearing away her veil when he turned to look. She blushed suddenly—so much was not to be mistaken—and the eyes that met his were remarkable for other reasons than the sheer loveliness of them, in that, even in the one flash of them he caught, they meant so many things at one time. But, above all, these eyes were fully conscious of Tom Vanrevel.

Without realizing what he did Mr. Vanrevel stopped short. He had been swinging a walking stick, which, describing a brief arc, remained poised halfway in its descent. There was only that one glance between them, and the carriage disappeared, leaving a scent of spring flowers in the air.

The young man was left standing on the wooden pavement in the midst of a great loneliness, yet enveloped in the afterglow, his soul roseate, his being quivering, his expression, like his came, instantaneously arrested. With such promptitude and finish was he disposed of that had Miss Carewe been aware of his name and the condition wrought in him by the single stroke she could have sought only the terse Richard of England for a like executive ability: "Off with his head! So much for Vanrevel!"

She had lifted a slender hand to the fluttering veil, a hand in a white glove with a small lace gauntlet at the wrist. This gesture was the final divinity of the radiant vision which remained with the dazed young man as he went down the street, and it may have been three-quarters of an hour later when the background of the picture became vivid to him—a carefully dressed gentleman with heavy brows and a handsome high nose, who sat stiffly upright beside the girl, his very bright eyes quite as conscious of the stricken pedestrian as were hers; vastly different, however, in this—that they glittered—nay, almost bristled—with hostility, while every polished button of his blue coat seemed to reflect their malignancy and to dart little echoing shafts of venom at Mr. Vanrevel.

Tom was dismayed by the acuteness of his perception that a man who does not speak to you has no right to have a daughter like the lady in the carriage, and the moment of this realization occurring as he sat making a poor pretense to eat his evening meal at the Rouen House, he dropped his fork rattling upon his plate and leaned back, staring at nothing, a proceeding of which his table mate, Mr. William Cummings, the editor of the Rouen Journal, was too busy over his river bass to take note.

"Have you heard what's new in town?" asked Cummings presently, looking up.

"No," said Tom truthfully, for he had seen what was new, but not heard it.

"Old Carewe's brought his daughter home," Fanchon Barraud was with her at St. Mary's until last year, and Fanchon says she's not only a great beauty, but a great dear."

"Ah!" rejoined the other with masterly indifference. "Dare say—dare say."

"No wonder you're not interested," said Cummings cheerfully, returning to the discussion of his bass. "The old villain will take precious good care you don't come near her."

Mr. Vanrevel already possessed a profound conviction to the same effect. Robert Meilhac Carewe was known not only as the wealthiest citizen of Rouen, but also as its heartiest and most steadfast hater; and, although there were only 5,000 or 6,000 inhabitants, neither was a small distinction, for Rouen was ranked in those easy days as a wealthy town, even as it was called an old town, proud of its age and its riches and bitter in its politics, of course. The French had built a fort there soon after La Salle's last voyage and, as Crailley Gray said, had settled the place, and had then been settled themselves by the pioneer militia. After the Revolution, Carolinians and Virginians had come by way of Tennessee and Kentucky, while the adventurous countrymen from Connecticut, traveling thither to sell, remained to buy—and then sell—when the country was in its teens. In course of time the little trading post of the northwest territory had grown to be the leading center of elegance and culture in the Ohio valley—at least they said so in Rouen.

Robert Carewe was Rouen's magnate, commercially and socially, and, until an upstart young lawyer named Vanrevel struck into his power with a broadsword, politically. The wharfs were Carewe's; the warehouses that stood by the river and the line of packets which plied upon it were his. Half the town was his, and in Rouen this meant that he was possessed of the middle justice, the high and the low. His mother was a Frenchwoman, and in those days when to go abroad was a ponderous and venturesome undertaking, the fact that he had spent most of his youth in the French capital wrought a certain glamour about him, for to the American Paris was Europe, and it lay shimmering on the far horizon of every imagination, a golden city.

Mr. Carewe lived in an old fashioned house on the broad, quiet, shady street which bore his name. There was a wide lawn in front, shadowed under elm and locust trees and bounded by thick shrubberies. A long garden, fair with roses and hollyhocks, lay outside the library windows—an old time garden, with fine gravel paths and green arbors, drowsed over in summer time by the bees, while overhead the locust rasped his rusty cadences the livelong day, and a faraway sounding love note from the high branches brought to mind the line, like an old refrain:

The voice of the turtle was heard in the land.

Between the garden and the carriage gates there was a fountain where a bronze boy with the dropsy (but not minding it) lived in a perpetual bath from a green goblet held over his head. Near by a stone sundial gleamed against a clump of lilac bushes, and it was upon this spot that the white kitten introduced Thomas Vanrevel to Miss Carewe.

Upon the morning after her arrival, having finished her pianoforte practice, touched her harp twice and arpeggiated the "Spanish Fandango" on her guitar, Miss Betty read two paragraphs of "Gilbert" (for she was profoundly determined to pursue her tasks with diligence), but, the open windows disclosing a world of sunshine and green leaves, she threw the book aside with a good conscience and danced out to the garden. There, coming upon a fuzzy white ball rolling into itself spirally on a lacy pathway, she pounced at it, whereupon the thing uncurled with lightning swiftness and fled, more like a streak than a kitten, down the drive, through the open gates and into the street. Miss Betty in full cry.

Across the way there chanced to be strolling a young lady in blue, accompanied by a gentleman whose leisurely gait gave no indication of the maneuvering he had done to hasten their walk into its present direction. He was apparently thirty or thirty-one, tall, very straight, dark, smooth shaved, his eyes keen, deep set and thoughtful, and his high white hat, white satin cravat and careful collar were evidence of an elaboration of toilet somewhat unusual in Rouen for the morning. Also he was carrying a pair of white gloves in his hand and dangled a slender ebony cane from his wrist. The dainty kitten headed toward the couple when, with a celerity only to be accounted for on the theory that his eye had been fixed on the Carewe gateway for some time previous to this sudden apparition, the gentleman leaped in front of the fugitive.

The kitten attempted a dodge to pass; the gentleman was there before it. The kitten feinted; the gentleman was altogether too much on the spot. Immediately, and just as Miss Carewe, flushed and glowing, ran into the street, the small animal doubled, evaded Miss Betty's frantic clutch, re-entered the gateway and attempted a disappearance into the lilac bushes instead of going around them, only to find itself, for a fatal two seconds, in difficulties with the close set thickets of stems.

In regard to the extraordinary agility of which the pursuing gentleman was capable, it is enough to say that he

caught the cat. He emerged from the lilacs holding it in one hand, his gloves and white hat in the other, and presented himself before Miss Betty with a breathlessness not entirely attributable to his exertions.

For a moment, as she came running toward him and he met her flashing look, bright with laughter and recognition and haste, he stammered. A thrill nothing less than delicious sent the blood up behind his brown cheeks, for he saw that she, too, knew that this was the second time their eyes had met.

He could not speak at once, but when he could, "Permit me, madam," he said solemnly, offering the captive, "to restore your kitten."

An agitated kitten should not be detained by clasping its waist, and already the conqueror was paying for his victory. There ensued a final outrageous squirm of despair. Two frantic clarks, extended, drew one long red mark across the stranger's wrist and another down the back of his hand to the knuckles. They were good, hearty scratches, and the blood followed the artist's lines rapidly, but of this the young man took no note, for he knew that he was about to hear Miss Carewe's voice for the first time.

"They say the best way to hold them," he observed, "is by the scruff of the neck."

Beholding his wounds, suffered in her cause, she gave a plying cry that made his heart leap with the richness and sweetness of it. Catching the kitten from him, she dropped it to the ground in such wise as to prove nature's foresight most kind in cushioning the feet of cats.

"Ah, I didn't want it that much!" "A cat in the hand is worth two nightingales in the bush," he said boldly and laughed. "I would shed more blood than that!"

Miss Betty blushed like a southern dawn and started back from him. From the convent but yesterday—and she had taken a man's hand in both of hers!

It was to this tableau that the lady in blue entered, following the hunt through the gates, where she stopped with a discomfited countenance. At once, however, she advanced and, with a cry of greeting, enveloped Miss Betty in a brief embrace, to the relief of the latter's confusion. It was Fanchon Barraud, now two years emancipated from St. Mary's and far gone in taffeta. With her lustrous light hair, absent blue eyes and her gentle voice, as small and pretty as her face and figure, it was not too difficult to justify Crailley Gray's characterization of her as one of those winsome baggages who had made an air of feminine helplessness the fashion of the day.

"I'm so glad—glad!" exclaimed Betty. "You were just coming to see me, weren't you? My father is in the library. Let me!"

Miss Barraud drew back. "No, no," she interrupted hastily and with evident perturbation. "I—we must be on our way immediately." She threw a glance at the gentleman, which let him know that she now comprehended his gloves and why their stroll had trended toward Carewe street. "Come at once," she commanded him quickly in an undertone.

"But now that you're here," said Miss Betty, wondering very much why he was not presented to her, "won't you wait and let me gather a nosegay for you? Our pansies and violets!"

"I could help," the gentleman suggested, with the look of a lame dog at Miss Barraud. "I have been considered useful about a garden."

"Fool!" Betty did not hear the word that came from Miss Barraud's closed teeth, though she was mightily surprised at the visible agitation of her schoolmate, for the latter's face was pale and excited. And Miss Carewe's amazement was complete when Fanchon, without more words, cavalierly



"I didn't want it that much!"

seized the gentleman's arm and moved toward the street with him as rapidly as his perceptible reluctance to leave permitted. But at the gate Miss Barraud turned and called back over her shoulder, as if remembering the necessity of offering an excuse for so remarkable a proceeding: "I shall come again very soon. Just now we are upon an errand of great importance. Good day!"

Miss Betty waved her hand, staring after them, her eyes large with wonder. She compressed her lips tightly. "Errand!" This was the friend of childhood's happy hour, and they had not met in two years!

"Errand!" She ran to the hedge, along the top of which a high white hat was now seen perambulating. She pressed down a loose branch and called in a tender voice to the stranger whom Fanchon had chosen should remain nameless:

"Be sure to put some salve on your hand!"

He made a bow which just missed being too low, but did miss it. "It is there already," he said and, losing his courage after the bow, made his speech with so palpable a gasp before the last word that the dullest person in the world could have seen that he meant it.

Miss Betty disappeared. There was a rigidity of expression about the gentle mouth of Fanchon Barraud, which her companion did not enjoy, as they went on their way, each preserving an uneasy silence, until at her own door she turned sharply upon him. "Tom Vanrevel, I thought you were the steadiest—and now you've proved yourself the craziest—soul in Rouen!" she burst out. "And I couldn't say worse!"

"Why didn't you present me to her?" asked Vanrevel.

"Because I thought a man of your gallantry might prefer not to face a shotgun in the presence of ladies!" "Pooh!"

"Pooh!" mimicked Miss Barraud. "You can 'pooh' as much as you like, but if he had seen us from the window—she covered her face with her hands for a moment, then dropped them and smiled upon him. 'I understand perfectly to what I owe the pleasure of a stroll with you this morning, and your casual insistence on the shadiness of Carewe street!' He laughed nervously, but her smile vanished, and she continued: 'Keep away, Tom. She is beautiful, and at St. Mary's I always thought she had spirit and wit too. I only hope Crailley won't see her before the wedding! But it isn't safe for you. Go along, now, and ask Crailley please to come at 3 this afternoon.'"

This message from Mr. Gray's betrothed was not all the ill starred Tom conveyed to his friend. Mr. Vanrevel was ordinarily esteemed a person of great reserve and discretion; nevertheless there was one man to whom he told everything, and from whom he had no secrets. He spent the noon hour in feeble attempts to describe to Crailley Gray the outward appearance of Miss Elizabeth Carewe—how she ran like a young Diana, what one felt upon hearing her voice, and he presented in himself an example exhibiting something of the cost of looking in her eyes. His conversation was more or less incoherent, but the effect of it was complete.

CHAPTER II.

DOES there exist an incredulous or jealous denizen of another portion of our country who, knowing that the room in the wooden cupola over Mr. Carewe's library was commonly alluded to by Rouen as the "tower chamber," will prove himself so sectionally prejudiced as to deny that the town was a veritable hotbed of literary interest or that Sir Walter Scott was ill appreciated there? Some of the men looked like others grinned at mention of this apartment, but the romantic were not lacking who spoke of it in whispers—how the lights sometimes shone there all night long and the gentlemen drove away, white faced, in the dawn. The cupola, rising above the library, overlooked the garden, and the house, save for that, was of a single story, with a low veranda running the length of its front. The windows of the library and of a row of bedrooms, one of which was Miss Betty's, lined the veranda steamboat fashion. The inner doors of these rooms all opening upon a long hall which bisected the house. The stairway leading to the room in the cupola rose in the library itself, while the bisecting hall afforded the only access to the library; hence the gossip, well acquainted with the geography of the place, conferred seriously together upon what effect Miss Betty's home coming would have in this connection, for any one going to the stairway must needs pass her door, and, what was more to the point, a party of gentlemen descending late from the mysterious turret might not be so quiet as they intended and the young lady sufficiently disturbed to inquire of her father what entertainment he provided that should keep his guests until 4 in the morning.

But at present it was with the opposite end of the house that the town was occupied, for there workmen were hammering and sawing and painting all day long, finishing the addition Mr. Carewe was building for his daughter's debut. This hammering disturbed Miss Betty, who had become almost as busy with the French revolution as with her mantua maker, for she had found in her father's library many books not for convent shelves, and she had become a Girondin.

She found memoirs, histories and tales of that delectable period, and for a week there was no meal in that house to which she sat down earlier than half an hour late. She had a rightful property interest in the revolution, her own great-uncle having been one of those who suffered, not, however, under the guillotine, for to Georges Meilhac appertained the rare distinction of death by accident on the day when the businesslike young Bonaparte played upon the mob with his cannon.

There were some yellow letters of this great-uncle's in a box which had belonged to her grandmother, a rich discovery for Miss Betty, who read and reread them with eager and excited eyes, living more in Paris with Georges and his friends than in Rouen with her father. Indeed, she had little else to do. Mr. Carewe was no comrade for her, by far the reverse. She seldom saw him, except at the table, when he sat with averted eyes and talked to her very little, and while making elaborate preparation for her introduction to his friends (such was his phrase), he treated her with a perfunctory civility which made her wonder if her advent was altogether welcome to him, but when she noticed that his hair looked darker than usual about every fourth

day she began to understand why he appeared ungrateful to her for growing up. He went out a great deal, though no visitors came to the house, for it was known that Mr. Carewe desired to present his daughter to no one until he presented her to all. Fanchon Barraud, indeed, made one hurried and embarrassed call, evading Miss Betty's reference to the chevalier of the kitchen with a dexterity too nimble to be thought unintentional. Miss Carewe was forbidden to return her friend's visit until after her debut, and Mr. Carewe explained that there were always some worthless young men hanging about Barraud's, where, he did not add, and interfered with a worthy old one who desired to honor Fanchon's older sister, Virginia.

This was no great hardship for Miss Betty, as, since plunging into the revolution with her great-uncle, she had lost some curiosity concerning the men of today, doubting that they would show forth as heroic, as debonair, gay and tragic as he. He was the legendary hero of her childhood. She remembered her mother's stories of him perhaps more clearly than she remembered her mother, and one of the older sisters had known him in Paris and had talked of him at great length, giving the flavor of his dandyism and his beauty at first hand to his young relative.

In the library hung a small full length drawing of Georges, done in color by Miss Betty's grandmother, and this she carried to her own room and studied long and ardently until sometimes the man himself seemed to stand before her.

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. Meilhac 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 his 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 low 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 inability 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 tragedy, the young girl felt a picture of family greatness or at least of picture-ness descend 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 Crailley 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? Crailley 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 house-tops 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 her 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 Meilhac 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 she 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 semivisual 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 Crailley 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 incorporeal, 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 apparition must offer so tame 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 incorporeal 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 leaping 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.

HOSE angels appointed to be guardians of the merry people of Rouen, poised one night between 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 gossips appeared to agree with Crailley 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 Crailley 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 leading 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 bouffants 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 twitted 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 Madrilion 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 cards designated upon Mr. Carewe's hour 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.

It may be not untimely to remark also of these five redoubtable hearts that during the evening it occurred to every one of them to be glad that Crailley Gray was betrothed to Fanchon Barraud, and that he was down on a Rouen river with a canoe, a rod and a tent. Nay, without more words, to declare the truth in regard to Crailley, they felt greater security in his absence from the field than in his presence. As Mr. Chenoweth, a youth as trothful 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, "Crailley, you know—well, Crailley's been engaged before." It was not Mr. Chenoweth's habit to disguise his apprehensions, and Crailley Gray would not fish for bass forever.

The same Chenoweth was he who, maddened by the general's triumphant familiarity with of toying with Miss Betty's fan between two dances, attempted to propose to her during the surprise waltz. Having sung "Oh, be lieve me!" in her ear as loudly as he could, he expressed the wish, quite as loudly, "that this waltz might last for a while."

Continued Next Week

Hop growers will do well before placing orders for hop tickets to call at the Guard office and see the best system for the growers.

CASTORIA
The Kind You Have Always Bought
Beware of cheap imitations.
Signature: *Chas. H. Fletcher*