The Two Vanrevels

By BOOTH TARKINGTON,

Author of "The Gentleman From Indiana" and "Monsieur Beaucaire"

Copyright, 1902, by S. S. McClure Co.

CHAPTER XVI CONTINED

an, 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 start, a 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. Crailey 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 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 Crailey 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, Crailey 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 Crailey, 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

"To Miss Betty Carewe."

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 Crailey 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 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 festal 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."

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 Crailey 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 Crailey 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."

"I doubt if you've breakfasted, brother," Crailey responded aloud, rubbing the dog's head softly with the tip of his boot. "Will you share the meager fare of one who is a poet, should be a lawyer, but is about to become a soldier? Eh, but a corporal! Rise, my friend. Up and be in your own small self a whole corporal's guard! And if your corporal doesn't come home from the wars, perhaps you'll remember him kindly. Think?"

He made a vivacious gesture, the small animal sprang into the air, convoluted with gratitude and new love, while Crailey, laughing softly, led the way to the hotel. There, while he ate sparsely himself, he provided munificently for his new acquaintance and recommended him, with an accompaniment of silver, to the good offices of the Rouen House kitchen. After that out into the sunshine again he went with elastic step and a merry word and a laugh for every one he met. At the old English gardener's he bought four or five bouquets and carried them on a round of visits of farewell to as many old ladies who had been kind to him. This done, leaving his laughter and his flowers behind him, he went to Fanchon and spent part of the afternoon bringing forth cunning arguments cheerily to prove to her that General Taylor would be in the Mexican capital before the volunteers reached New Orleans and urging upon her his belief that they would all be back in Rouen before the summer was gone.

But Fanchon could only sob and whisper, "Hush, hush!" In the dim room where they sat, the windows darkened so that after he had gone he should not remember how red her eyes were and the purple depths under them and thus forget how pretty she had been at her best. After a time, finding that the more he tried to cheer her the more brokenly she wept, he grew silent, only stroking her head, while the summer sounds came in through the window, the mill whir of locusts, the small monotone of distant farm bells, the laughter of children in the street and the gay arias of a mocking bird swinging in the open window of the next house. So they sat together through the long, still afternoon of the last day.

No one in Rouen found that afternoon particularly enlivening. Even Mrs. Tanberry gave way to the common depression, and, once more her doctrine of cheerfulness relegated to the ghostly ranks of the purely theoretical, she bowed under the burden of her woe so far as to sing "Methought I Met a Damsel Fair" (her of the bursting sighs) at the piano. Whenever sadness lay upon her soul she had acquired the habit of resorting to this unhappy ballad; today she sang it four times. Mr. Carewe was not at home and had announced that, though he intended to honor the evening meal by his attendance, he should be away for the evening itself, as comment upon which statement Mrs. Tanberry had offered ambiguously the one word, "Amen." He was stung to no reply, and she had noted the circumstance as unusual and also that he had appeared to labor with the suppression of a keen excitement which made him anxious to escape from her sharp little eyes; an agitation for which she easily accounted when she recalled that he had seen Vanrevel on the previous evening. Mr. Carewe had kept his promise to preserve the peace, as he always kept it when the two met on neutral ground, but she had observed that his face showed a kind of hard leashed violence whenever he had been forced to breathe the air of the same room with his enemy, and that the thing grew on him.

Miss Betty exhibited not precisely a burning interest in the adventure of the damsel fair, wandering out of the room during the second rendition, wandering back again and once more away. She had moved about the house in this fashion since early morning, wearing what Mamie described as a "peaked look." White faced and restless, with distressed eyes, to which no sleep had come in the night, she could not read. She could no more than touch her harp. She could not sleep. She could not remain quiet for three minutes together. Often she sank into a chair with an air of languor and weariness, only to start immediately out of it and seek some other part of the house or to go and pace the garden. Here in the air heavy with roses and tremulous with June as she walked rapidly up and down late in the afternoon, at the time when the faraway farm bells were calling men from the fields to supper, the climax of her restlessness came. That anguish and desperation, so old in her sex, the rebellion against the law that inaction must be her part, had fallen upon her for the first time. She came to an abrupt stop and struck her hands together despairingly and spoke aloud.

"What shall I do? What shall I do?"

"Ma'am?" asked a surprised voice just behind her.

She wheeled quickly about to behold a shock headed urchin of ten in the path near the little clearing. He was ragged, tanned, dusty, neither shoes nor coat trammeling his independence, and he had evidently entered the garden through the gap in the hedge.

"I thought you spoke to me," he said inquiringly.

"I didn't see you," she returned. "What is it?"

"You Miss Carewe?" he asked, but before she could answer he said reassuringly: "Why, of course you are! I remember you perfect, now I git the light on you, so to speak. Don't you remember me?"

"No, I don't think I do."

"Lord!" he responded wonderingly. "I was one of the boys with you on them boxes the night of you pa's arrer." Mingled with the surprise in his tone was a respectful unction which intimated how greatly he honored her father for having been the owner of so satisfactory a conflagration.

"Were you? Perhaps I'll remember you if you give me time."

But at this point the youth recalled the fact that he had an errand to discharge, and, assuming an expression of businesslike haste too pressing to permit further parley, sought in his pocket and produced a sealed envelope with which he advanced upon her.

"Here. There's an answer. He told me not to tell anybody who sent it, and not to give it to nobody on earth but you, and how to slip in through the hedge and try and find you in the garden when nobody was lookin', and he give a pencil for you to answer on the back of it, and a dollar."

Miss Betty took the note, glancing once over her shoulder at the house, but Mrs. Tanberry was still occupied with the maiden, and no one was in sight. She read the message hastily:

I have obeyed you and shall always. You have not sent for me. Perhaps that was because there was no time when you thought it safe. Perhaps you have still felt there would be a loss of dignity. Does that weigh with you against goodby? Tell me, if you can, that you have it in your heart to let me go without seeing you once more—without goodby—for the last time. Or was it untrue that you wrote me what you did? Was that dear letter but a little fairy dream of mine? Ah, will you see me again, this once—this once—let me look at you, let me talk with you, hear your voice? The last time!

There was no signature.

Miss Betty quickly wrote a few lines upon the same sheet:

Yes—yes! I must see you—must talk with you before you go. Come at dusk. The garden—near the gap in the hedge. It will be safe for a little while. He will not be here.

She replaced the paper in its envelope, drew a line through her own

Carewe seized the missive.

name on the letter and wrote "Mr. Vanrevel" underneath.

"Do you know the gentleman who sent you?" she asked.

"No'm; but he'll be waitin' at his office, Gray & Vanrevel, on Main street, for the answer."

"Then hurry!" said Betty.

He needed no second bidding, but, with wings on his bare heels, made off through the gap in the hedge. At the corner of the street he encountered an adventure—a gentleman's legs and a heavy hand at the same time. The hand fell on his shoulder, arresting his scamper with a vicious jerk, and the boy was too awed to attempt an escape, for he knew his captor well by sight, although never before had he found himself so directly in the company of Rouen's richest citizen. The note dropped from the small trembling fingers, yet those fingers did not shake as did the man's when, like a flash, Carewe seized upon the missive with his disengaged hand and saw what two names were on the envelope.

"You were stealing, were you?" he cried savagely. "I saw you sneak through my hedge!"

"I didn't either!"

Mr. Carewe ground his teeth. "What were you doing there?"

"Nothing!"

"Nothing!" mocked Carewe. "Nothing! You didn't carry this to the young lady in there and get her answer?"

"No, sir!" answered the captive earnestly. "Cross my heart I didn't. I found it!"

Slowly the corrugations of anger were leveled from the magnate's face, the white heat cooled, and the prisoner marveled to find himself in the presence of an urbane gentleman whose placidity made the scene of a moment ago appear some trick of distorted vision. And yet, curious to behold, Mr. Carewe's fingers shook even more violently than before as he released the boy's shoulder and gave him a friendly tap on the head, at the same time smiling benevolently.

"There, there," he said, bestowing a wink upon the youngster. "It's all right. It doesn't matter; only I think I see the chance of a jest in this. You wait while I read this little note, this message that you found!" He ended by winking again with the friendliest drollery.

He turned his back to the boy and opened the note, continuing to stand in that position while he read the two messages. It struck the messenger that after this there need be no great shame in his own lack of this much vaunted art of reading, since it took so famous a man as Mr. Carewe such length of time to peruse a little note. But perhaps the great gentleman was ill, for it appeared to the boy that he lurched several times, once so far that he would have gone over if he had not saved himself by a lucky stagger. And once, except for the fact that the face that had turned away had worn an expression of such genial humor, the boy would have believed that from it issued a sound like the gnashing of teeth.

But when it was turned to him again it bore the same amiable jocosity of mouth and eye, and nothing seemed to be the matter, except that those fingers still shook so wildly—too wildly, indeed—to restore the note to its envelope.

"There," said Mr. Carewe, "put it back, laddie; put it back yourself. Take it to the gentleman who sent you. I see he's even disguised his hand a trifle—ha, ha!—and I suppose he may not have expected the young lady to write his name quite so boldly on the envelope! What do you suppose?"

"I d'know," returned the boy. "I reckon I don't hardly understand."

"No, of course not," said Mr. Carewe, laughing rather madly. "Ha, ha, ha! Of course you wouldn't. And how much did he give you?"

"Yay!" cried the other joyously. "Didn't he go and hand me a dollar!"

"How much will you take not to tell him that I stopped you and read it? How much not to speak of me at all?"

"What?"

"It's a foolish kind of joke, nothing more. I'll give you $5 never to tell any one that you saw me today."

"Don't shoot, colonel!" exclaimed the youth, with a riotous fling of bare feet in the air. "I'll come down!"

"You'll do it?"

"Five!" he shouted, dancing upon the boards. "Five! I'll cross my heart to die I never hear 'tell of you or ever knew they was sich a man in the world!"

Carewe bent over him. "No! Say, 'God strike me dead and condemn me eternally to the everlasting flames of hell if I ever tell!'"

This entailed quick sobriety, though only benevolence was in the face above him. The jig step stopped, and the boy pondered, frightened.

"Have I got to say that?"

Mr. Carewe produced a bank bill about which the boy beheld a halo. Clearly this was his day. Heaven showed its approval of his conduct by an outpouring of imperishable riches. And yet the oath misliked him. There was a savor of the demoniacal contract. Still that was to be borne and the plunge taken, for there fluttered the huge sum before his dazzled eyes. He took a deep breath. "'God strike me dead,'" he began slowly, "'if I ever'"—

"No. 'And condemn me to the everlasting flames of hell'"—

"Have I got to?"

"Yes."

"'And condemn me to—to the everlasting flames of—of hell if I ever tell!'"

He ran off, pale with the fear that he might grow up, take to drink and some day tell in his cups, but so resolved not to coquet with temptation that he went round a block to avoid the door of the Rouen House bar. Nevertheless the note was in his hand and the fortune in his pocket.

And Mr. Carewe was safe. He knew that the boy would never tell, and he knew another thing, for he had read the Journal, though it came no more to his house—he knew that Tom Vanrevel wore his uniform that evening and that, even in the dusk, the brass buttons on an officer's breast make a good mark for a gun steadied along the ledge of a window. As he entered the gates and went toward the house he glanced up at the window which overlooked his garden from the cupola.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CRAILEY was not the only man in Rouen who had been saying to himself all day that each accustomed thing he did was done for the last time. Many of his comrades went about with "Farewell, old friend," in their hearts, not only for the people, but for the usual things of life and the actions of habit, now become unexpectedly dear and sweet to know or to perform. So Tom Vanrevel, relieved of his hot uniform, loose as to collar, wearing a big dressing gown and stretched in a chair, watched the sunset from the western window of the dusty office, where he had dreamed through many sunsets in summers past, and now took his leave of this old habit of his in silence, with a long cigar, considering the chances largely against his ever seeing the sun go down behind the long wooden bridge at the foot of Main street again.

The ruins of the warehouses had been removed, and the river was laid clear to his sight. It ran between brown banks like a river of rubies, and at the wharf the small evening steamboat, ugly and grim enough to behold from near by, lay pink and lovely in that broad glow, tooting imminent departure, although an hour might elapse before it would back into the current.

The sun widened, clung briefly to the horizon and dropped behind the low hills beyond the bottom lands; the stream grew purple, then took on a luster of pearl as the stars came out, while rosy distances changed to misty blue; the chatter of the birds in the Main street maples became quieter and, through lessening little choruses of twittering, fell gradually to silence. And now the blue dusk crept on the town, and the corner drug store window lights threw mottled colors on the pavement. From the hall, outside the closed office door, came the sound of quick, light footsteps. It was Crailey going out, but Tom only sighed to himself and did not hail him. So these light footsteps of Crailey Gray echoed but a moment in the stairway and were heard no more.

A few moments later a tall figure, wrapped from neck to heels in a gray cloak, rapidly crossed the mottled lights and disappeared into Carewe street. This cloaked person wore on his head a soldier's cap, and Tom, not recognizing him surely, vaguely wondered why Tappingham Marsh chose to muffle himself so warmly on a June evening. He noted the quick, alert tread as unlike Marsh's usual gait, but no suspicion crossed his mind that the figure might be that of his partner.

A rocket went up from the Rouen House, then another, followed by a salvo of anvils and a rackety discharge of small arms, the beginning of a noble display of fireworks in celebration of the prospective victories of the United States and the utter discomfiture of the Mexicans when the Rouen volunteers should reach the seat of war, an exhibition of patriotism which brought little pleasure to Mr. Vanrevel.

But over the noise of the street he heard his own name shouted from the stairway, and almost instantly a violent knocking assailed the door. Before he could bid the visitor enter, the door was flung open by a stout and excited colored woman who, at sight of him, threw up her hands in tremulous thanksgiving. It was the vain Mamie.

She sank into a chair and rocked herself to and fro, gasping to regain her lost breath. "Bless de good God 'lmighty, you ain' gone out!" she panted. "I run an' I run, an' I come so fas' I got stitches in de side f'um head to heel!"

Tom brought her a glass of water, which she drank between gasps.

"I nevah run so befo' enduin' my livin' days," she asserted. "You knows me, who I am an' whum I cum f'um, nigh's well's I knows who you is, I reckon, Maje' Vanrevel?"

"Yes, yes, I know. Will you tell me who sent you?"

"Miz Tanberry, suh, dat who sended me, an' in a venomous hurry she done de same!"

"Yes. Why? Does she want me?"

Mamie emitted a screech. "'Deed she mos' everlas'in'ly does not! Dat de ve'y exackindes' livin' t'ing she does not want!"

"Then what is it, Mamie?"

"Lemme git my bref, suh, an' you hole yo'ne whiles I tell you! She say to me, she say, 'Is you 'quainted Maje' Vanrevel, Mamie?' s' she, an' I up'n' answuh, 'Not to speak wid, but dey ain' none on 'em I don' knows by sight, an' none betterer dan him,' I say. Den she say, she say, 'You run all de way an' fin' dat young man,' she say, s' she, 'an' if you don' git dah fo' he leave, er don' stop him on de way, den God 'lmighty fergive you!' she say. 'But you tell him f'um Jane Tanberry not to come nigh dis house or dis gyahden dis night! Tell him dat Jane Tanberry warn him he mus' keep outer Carewe's way ontel he safe on de boat tomorrer. Tell him Jane Tanberry beg him to stay in he own room dis night, an' dat she beg it on her bented knees!' An' dis she say to me when I tole her what Nelson see in dat house dis evenin'. An' hyuh I is, an' hyuh you is, an' de blessed Jesus be thank', you is hyuh!"

Tom regarded her with a grave attention. "What made Mrs. Tanberry think I might be coming there tonight?"

"Dey's cur'ous goin's on in dat house, suh! De young lady, she ain' like herself. All de day long she wanduh up an' down an' roun' about. Miz Tanberry are a mighty guessifying woman, an' de minute I tell her what Nelse see she s'pec' you a-comin' an' dat de boss mos' pintedly preparin' fo' it!"

"Can you make it a little clearer for me, Mamie? I'm afraid I don't understand."

"Well, suh, you know dat ole man Nelson; he allays tell me ev'yt'ing he know an' ev'yt'ing he think he know, jass de same, suh. An' dat ole Nelse, he mos' 'sessful cull'd man in de worl' to crope roun' de house an' pick up de gossip an' git de 'fo' an' behine er what's goin' on. So 'twas dat he see de boss, when he come in to'des even-

It was the vain Mamie.

in', tek dat heavy musket offn' de racks an' load an' clean her, an' he do it wid a mighty bad look 'bout de mouf. Den he gone up to de cupoly, an' lef' it dah an' den come down ag'in. Whiles dey all is eatin' he 'nounce th'ee time' dat he goin' be 'way endu'in' de evenin'. Den he gone out de front do' an' out de gates an' down de street. Den, suh, den, suh, 'tain't no mo'n a half 'n 'our ago, Nelse come to me an' say dat he see de boss come roun' de stable, keepin' close in by de shrubbery, an' crope in de ballroom winder, w'ich is close to de groun', suh. Nelse 'uz a cleanin' he harness in de back yo'd, an' he let on not to see him, like. Miss Betty, she walkin' in her gyahden an' Miz Tanberry fan' on de po'ch. Nelse, he slip de house whuh de lights ain' lit an' stan' an' listen long time in de liberry at de foot er dem sta'hs, an' he hyuh dat man move, suh! Den Nelse know dat he done crope up to de cupoly room an'—an' dey he settin' dah, waitin'! Soze he come an' tole me, an' I beg Miz Tanberry come in de kitchen, an' I tole her. An' she sended me hyuh to you, suh. An' if you 'uz a-goin', de good God 'lmighty mus' er kep' you ontel I got hyuh!"

"No, I wasn't going." Tom smiled upon her sadly. "I dare say there's a simpler explanation. Don't you suppose that if Nelson was right and Mr. Carewe really did come back it was because he did not wish his daughter and Mrs. Tanberry to know that—that he expected a party of friends, possibly, to join him there later?"

"What he doin' wid dat gun, suh? Nobody goin' play cyahds ner frow dice wid a gun, is dey?" asked Mamie as she rose and walked toward the door.

"Oh, that was probably by chance."

"No, suh!" she cried vehemently. "An' dem gelmun wouldn' play t'night no way; mos' on 'em goin' wid you tomorrer, an' dey sayin' goodby to de'r folks dis evenin', not gamblin'! Miz Tanberry 'll be in a state er mine ontel she hyuh f'um me, an' I goin' hurry back. You won' come dar, suh? I kin tell her dat you say you suttney ain' comin' nigh our neighborhood dis night?"

"I had not dreamed of coming, tell her, please. Probably I shall not go out at all this evening. But it was kind of you to come. Good night."

He stood with a candle to light her down the stairs, but after she had gone he did not return to the office. Instead, he went slowly up to his own room, glancing first into Crailey's—the doors of neither were often locked—to behold a chaos of disorder and unfinished packing. In his own chamber it only remained for him to close the lids of a few big boxes and to pack a small trunk which he meant to take with him to the camp of the state troops and he would be ready for departure. He set about this task and, concluding that there was no necessity to wear his uniform on the steamboat, decided to place it in the trunk and went to the bed where he had folded and left it. It was not there; nor did a thorough search reveal it anywhere in the room. Yet no one could have stolen it, for when he had gone down to the office Crailey had remained on this floor. Mamie had come within a few minutes after Crailey went out, and during his conversation with her the office door had been open; no one could have passed without being seen. Also a thief would have taken other things as well as the uniform, and surely Crailey must have heard; Crailey would—Crailey—

Then Tom remembered the figure in the long cloak and the military cap and with a sick heart began to understand. He had read the Journal, and he knew why Crailey might wish to masquerade in a major's uniform that night. If Miss Carewe read it, too, and a strange wonder rose in her mind, this and a word would convince her. Tom considered it improbable that the wonder would rise, for circumstance had too well established her in a mistake, trivial and ordinary enough at first, merely the confusing of two names by a girl new to the town, but so strengthened by every confirmation Crailey's wit could compass that she would no doubt only set Cummings' paragraph aside as a newspaper error. Still Crailey had wished to be on the safe side.

Tom sighed rather bitterly. He was convinced that the harlequin would come home soon, replace the uniform (which was probably extremely becoming to him, as they were of a height and figure much the same) and afterward in his ordinary dress would sally forth to spend his last evening with Fanchon. Tom wondered how Crailey would feel and what he would think about himself while he was changing his clothes, but he remembered his partner's extraordinary powers of mental adjustment, and for the first time in his life Vanrevel made no allowance for the other's temperament, and there came to him a moment when he felt that he could almost dislike Crailey Gray.

At all events, he would go out until Crailey had come and gone again, for he had no desire to behold the masquerader's return. So he exchanged his dressing gown for a coat, fastened his collar and had begun to arrange his cravat at the mirror when suddenly the voice of the old negress seemed to sound close beside him in the room:

"He's settin' dah—waitin'!"

The cravat was never tied. Tom's hands dropped to his sides as he started back from the staring face in the mirror. Robert Carewe was waiting, and Crailey— All at once there was but one vital necessity in the world for Tom Vanrevel—that was to find Crailey. He must go to Crailey even in Carewe's own house. He must go to Crailey!

He dashed down the stairs and into the street. The people were making a great uproar in front of the hotel, exploding bombs, firing muskets in the air, sending up rockets, and, rapidly crossing the outskirts of the crowd, he passed into Carewe street unnoticed. Here the detonations were not so deafening, though the little steamboat at the wharf was contributing to the confusion with all in her power, screeching simultaneously approval of the celebration and her last signals of departure.

At the first corner Tom had no more than left the sidewalk when he came within a foot of being ridden down by two horsemen who rode at so desperate a gallop that, the sound of their hoofbeats being lost in the uproar from Main street, they were upon him before he was aware of them.

Continued Next Saturday

A famous Wisconsin woman once said, "All this poor earth needs is just the art of being kind." Won't some one be kind enough to prepare Hollister's Rocky Mountain Tea? It helps to make people kind and well. Tea or tablets, 35 cents. Hollister Drug Co.