

# THREE LOVES.

BY WINNIFRED EATON.

## I.

### THE FIRST—"CARROTS."

HER real name was Carrie, but some smart schoolmate had dubbed her "Carrots," and as her hair was of that color children consider violently red, Carrots she had remained ever since. She was half French and half Irish, and her temper was as fiery as her hair. She attended the same school as I did in Montreal, Canada. I was of the smart set, however, for my father was a Q. C., an M. P., and a big man in Canada, and I was a dude and a beau among the girls, and spent all my pocket money on chocolate caramels and car rides for them.

Carrots, on the other hand, was a queer, isolated little girl, who refused to be on even civil terms with any one in the class. This was because they had laughed at her the first day she had come, and she had assumed an antagonistic attitude ever since. The first year there were fierce and bitter battles waged, in which Carrots generally came out the personal victor, though she was punished by the teacher, and afterwards beaten by her stepmother. Then a sort of silence fell on Carrots, and for a long time she went back and forth to the school, never so much as exchanging a word with anybody, save the teacher in the class.

Then the senior year passed a number of us, with scholarships or otherwise, into the High School, among them Carrots and myself. Up till then, I had never given her a thought, save to marvel at her red hair, fiery temper, and freckles. I was fifteen and Carrots twelve, the year we graduated.

One bright day, I, with my chum and a couple of girls, went down to Nun's Creek in Hochelaga. We hired a row-boat and went out on the river, ostensibly to fish, though the girls' chattering made that impossible. When we were out quite a little way from the shore, suddenly Marie gave a screech,

which was instantly echoed, with variations, by Ethel.

"What's the matter?" I inquired, starting.

"Look!" Marie pointed behind me.

I turned. In about the middle of the stream was a rock jutting out of the water, and on the top of this rock was a little figure. She was dressed in a short blue cotton gown, and she was barefooted. Blowing in the wind all about her was the tawny mane of her hair. Her hands were on her hips, and she was steadily looking at us. I could almost see the reckless, daring smile which I knew lurked about her eyes.

"That awful girl," said Ethel.

"What a dress!" said poor little fashionable Marie.

The question uppermost in my mind was, how did Carrots get there? And the next thing that concerned me was the heroic one of saving her life. When I suggested this to the two young ladies (aged twelve and thirteen respectively) they looked resigned and refined. They did not relish Carrots' company. However, my chum and I pulled bravely to the rescue, when, just as we got within a few yards of the rock—horror of horrors!—Carrots pitched forward and went head first into the water.

I was stunned. My chum looked bewildered, and the girls began to cry. A few minutes afterwards, a little soaking wet and dripping head bobbed up right between our oars, and there was Carrots, looking out at us with such eyes—eyes that spoke immeasurable disdain and contempt, but no fear whatever.

"Catch on to the oar and I'll draw you in!" I shouted frantically. Instead of doing this, Carrots calmly ignored the oar, made a duck, and went under water again.

"She is trying to drown herself," said Marie in a dreadful voice.

"I know why *you* don't like the water," said a sarcastic little voice, and