

The Roupell Mystery

By Austyn Granville

CHAPTER II.

An hour had elapsed since Mme. Roupell's departure. Harriet Weldon arose softly, and, opening the window with great caution lest it should squeak upon its iron hinges, looked out again upon the front of the house. Everything was enveloped in a flood of moonlight. The fine grasses upon the lawn glittered like spears of ice with the heavily falling dew drops. The call of a night bird to its mate was the only sound that broke the stillness. The beauty of the night touched her deeply, and the song of the nightingale more profoundly yet. She leaned her head against the window frame and her slight form shook with suppressed sobs. The thought came that every minute's delay would make it more difficult for her lover to escape from the house. In a few hours the village would be stirring. He would be seen by some peasant going early afield, as he left the grounds. She must at once summon him from his hiding place. In a few minutes he could be gone, and she would breathe freely again.

Advancing on tiptoe to the door of the chamber, she turned the handle softly and stepped out into the passage. The house was perfectly quiet. In the semi-darkness she crept timidly up the corridor, feeling her way with the tips of her fingers against the old oaken wainscoting. At last her foot struck against a door mat. She tried to recollect what door mat it was. She stooped and passed her hand over it. It was an old-fashioned rag mat of American make, such as one sees in the houses of middle class farmers in New England. It had been her lover's request to have such a thing at the door of his room. It reminded him of his old home across the seas. It was all right. This was the apartment she wanted. She placed her fingers upon the handle of the door, opened it a little way, and called softly:

"Charles!"

To her surprise there was no answer. She opened the door wider yet, and went in. The moonlight, shining in through the window streamed over the carpet and made every portion of the chamber plainly visible. She glanced quickly around. To her intense astonishment the room was empty. Trembling with fear and excitement she again issued forth, and stood once more in the corridor. At the very moment that she did so, a pistol shot reverberated loudly through the chateau. And then from all parts of the house its inmates rushed hurriedly.

It was a terror-stricken assemblage of men and women, aroused in the dead of the night by that sharp, ominous appalling sound. In the supreme quiet of the chateau the pistol shot had rung out with terrible distinctness. Though terrified beyond measure in the almost certain knowledge that some dreadful tragedy had taken place, Harriet Weldon did not hesitate a moment. Dashing along the corridor she flung aside the heavy draperies which separated Mme. Roupell's sleeping apartment from her sitting room, and bravely entered.

Face to face, M. Chabot and her lover were standing. On the floor between them, lying at full length, her face turned upward, ghastly in the dim light of the solitary candle, lay Mme. Roupell. From a bullet wound in her forehead, a little blood was slowly oozing out to the floor and matting with its crimson flood the gray, waving and carefully combed hair. The room seemed suddenly to fill with people, all looking through a kind of mist. A ghastly, unwholesome pallor was on each face. The ordinary proprieties of life were set at naught. The conventionalities of dress were forgotten. Emily was bending over the prostrate woman, her fine features pale as death, but set as in marble, and showing no trace of tears or womanly weakness. She seemed the only collected one in the room; all the rest stood gasping and staring, a helpless, bewildered, frightened group. Emily evinced no surprise at seeing Van Lith there so unexpectedly, as everyone else did. With much presence of mind, she at once turned her attention to the sufferer, to see what could be done for her. She gave orders clearly and rapidly, and with a marvelous self-command.

"Lift her up and place her on the bed. Keep her head raised. This pillow so. Bring me water, quickly."

She bathed the cold, inanimate face; she folded her handkerchief up into a wad and placed it over the fatal spot. She bound over it as tightly as possible a long bandage torn from the white coverlet. Then she turned to Jean, the coachman, who, hearing the disturbance from the adjoining stables, had rushed into the house accompanied by the gardener.

"Take the fastest horse you have and ride to the village. Send Dr. Croizat up here; and then keep right straight on into Paris. Here, take this with you."

She turned to the writing table and hastily penned the following note:

"Please come to us immediately, and bring with you the best surgeon you can find. Aunt Ruth has been shot—I fear fatally. Come at once, I beg of you, or you may be too late."

"EMILY WELDON."

She folded the note and addressed it to "Dr. Paul Mason."

"Rue de Reverdy, No. 24."

"How long will it take you to deliver that?" she asked, as she handed it to the coachman.

"It is fourteen miles," replied the man. "I can do it in an hour and a half."

"I can cover the distance in half the time," exclaimed Van Lith, eagerly stepping forward. He had been standing quietly by Harriet, endeavoring to comfort her. "Give me the note, I will go at once."

Emily was about to hand it to him, when the voice of M. Chabot was heard raised in marked remonstrance. He spoke slowly, deliberately, and as Charles Van Lith listened, he felt that each word was an iron link in that chain which was soon to bind him hand and foot, and hold him up to the world as a murderer.

"Monsieur Van Lith must not leave this house until the shooting of Madame Roupell has been investigated by the proper authorities."

The suddenness of this accusation, the

error of it, the facts which, with its utterance, instantaneously arose in the mind of Van Lith and arrayed themselves remorselessly against him, deprived him for the moment of the power of reply. In the dead silence that ensued M. Chabot turned and dispatched the coachman on his errand, adding in an imperative tone:

"After you have called up the doctor, stop at Monsieur Revell's, the mayor, explain briefly what has happened, then go to Monsieur Delorme's, the justice of the peace. Tell him, too. Remember, Madame's life may depend on the quickness of your movements."

M. Chabot, whom one would never have suspected of being cast in an heroic mold, was undoubtedly the coolest person in the room.

Van Lith, fully conscious of the awful peril in which he stood, again essayed to speak. M. Chabot interrupted him. He did it politely; but there was no mistaking his firmness. The servants thought it admirable—and his knowledge of law, ah! was it not prodigious?

"Monsieur Van Lith, you may be a perfectly innocent man. If so, it will be easy enough for you to explain everything presently to the mayor, whom I have sent for. In the meantime, the fact of your appearance here at such an hour as this, under circumstances which lay you open to grave suspicion, make it my duty, as a citizen, to forbid your departure."

"Monsieur Chabot!" ejaculated Harriet. "What do you mean? You surely don't believe that Charles—that Monsieur Van Lith has done this horrible thing?"

The Frenchman shrugged his high shoulders—just a little, and showed his white teeth as he smiled—just a little, in a deprecating manner.

"Mam'selle must not blame me. I am simply doing my duty."

"O, this must not be," exclaimed the girl, now almost unnerved with apprehension. "I can explain all—I can clear him!"

But her wrist was seized in Van Lith's grasp.

"Mam'selle can explain?"—began Chabot, pricking up his little ears like a fox terrier.

"Mam'selle will explain nothing," returned Van Lith, meaningly regarding the Parisian.

"Then perhaps monsieur can?"

"When the proper time comes, yes. To you, you sneaking cur, not one syllable."

The Frenchman's face took on a ghastly color. He stammered out a few unintelligible words, as one who in the heat of a terrible passion pauses to find the most stinging epithet. But an exclamation from Emily Weldon checked both men instantly. She had been bending over the prostrate form of the injured woman. Now she looked up, the calm of a great despair in her face, the first tears she had shed glistening in her fine eyes.

"O, Harriet," she cried, "she is dead. I shall never hear her voice again."

The girl's grief was something terrible to witness. Harriet stole softly to her sister's side, and, putting her arms about her, strove to comfort her.

"Let us leave them," said Van Lith to M. Chabot, who stood awed and humbled in the presence of such affliction.

And side by side the two men, the Frenchman and the American, the accuser and the accused, went out from the chamber, leaving the living and despairing alone with their sacred dead.

CHAPTER III.

Victor Lablanche, the Parisian prefect of police, was a man who united within himself qualities not often found conjoined in the same individual, for while he was a sagacious and even brilliant theorist, he possessed at the same time a thorough practical knowledge of his business. In the course of his long career on the police he had risen, by ability alone, from a comparatively obscure to his present prominent position. When called upon to unravel a mysterious crime, he generally adopted a certain theory, and pursued it with the persistency of a bloodhound. It was the arrival of this officer that a little group of people inside, and a promiscuous crowd of about two hundred of the inhabitants of Villeneuve who were assembled outside the chateau impatiently awaited.

A sudden hush fell upon the gathering on the lawn as, about an hour after day-break, a dark-colored, unpretentious road cart turned into the avenue. M. Victor Lablanche had at once responded in person to the call made upon him. The reeking flanks and foam-covered sides of the animal in the shafts sufficiently attested the speed at which the distance between the village and the metropolis had been traversed.

M. Chabot, cool and collected as ever, was the first to receive the prefect. He conducted him into the reception room. The mayor and M. Delorme, the justice of the peace, were sipping their coffee in the dining room. Fearful that he might in some way compromise her, Van Lith had signed to Harriet not to come near him, and she now sat, in silent, fearless grief, with her arm about Emily's waist, in the window seat of the library.

Five minutes after the arrival of the coachman at his lodgings in the Rue de Reverdy, Dr. Paul Mason was on the road to the chateau. He had gazed for a moment on the face of his old friend.

"She must have died instantly," he remarked, as he turned sadly away.

M. le prefect was now at liberty to ask any question he chose. He did not care to ask any questions at present. He would go into the room where the mayor was, and hear what he had to say.

"Have you examined the prisoner?" was the first question he propounded to that functionary.

"I have attempted to; but he refuses to make any statement, saying he prefers to wait until he is brought before the tribunal. He has the right to waive the preliminary examination before the justice of course, but he is hardly wise in this instance. A plain explanation of how he came to be in the chateau at that time of night might go far toward acquitting him—that is," he added, "if it is capable of explanation."

M. Victor Lablanche allowed the worthy magistrate to ramble on. When that gentleman had quite finished, he said:

"You had better tell the prisoner and the principal witnesses to get ready to take the early train for Paris. The presence of your local physician will be necessary also, so that he can testify to the nature of the wound by which Madame Roupell met her death. In the meantime I will make an examination of the scene of the murder."

"That will be unnecessary. I have already made one."

"With what result, monsieur le maire?"

"The finding of this pistol, with which, doubtless, the murder was committed."

"Let me look at it."

The prefect took the weapon, and examined it carefully.

"It is of American manufacture," he said. "Did you find anything else?"

"Nothing except some private papers of Madame Roupell's scattered on the floor of her chamber."

"Where is the young man who has been accused of this crime?"

"He is under a strong guard at present, in the butler's pantry. Do you wish to see him?"

"No, I think not," he said. "The judge sits at ten o'clock, and he will hear what he has to say. Meantime, though, as I said, I wish to make an inspection of the premises."

The mayor at once bestirred himself, and conducted M. Lablanche upstairs to the room where the body of Madame Roupell was still lying. Nothing had been moved. Even the blood which had soaked into the hearth rug had not been wiped up; an overturned chair lay where it had fallen; some papers were scattered about the room.

"Do not disturb them," said M. Lablanche, pointing to the papers. "While they simply indicate how Madame Roupell was engaged at the time of the shooting, and perhaps have no bearing on the question of who committed this crime, still it is our rule to move nothing."

"And as to who did commit it, I think there can be no doubt," remarked the mayor.

"There is always room for doubt in any case," replied the prefect. "Of course this young man denies his guilt, though silent on other points?"

"Most decidedly he does."

"Then you have got to prove it in order to bring the crime home to him. You must recollect that under the revised penal code of France, the prisoner has no longer to prove his innocence of a charge. It is the duty of the law to bring it home to him."

"But Monsieur Chabot assures me," said the mayor, "that he found this young man in Madame Roupell's chamber immediately after the report of the pistol."

"Oh perhaps the young man found him. What do you think of that?" remarked the prefect. "You see, my dear sir, we must not be too hasty."

"I must confess that you put the matter in a new light; but Monsieur Van Lith's appearance in the chateau?"

"How does he account for that?"

"He refuses to account for that at all, as I said," replied the mayor.

"Was he in the habit of calling at this house?"

"At one time, but lately had been not only uninvited, but requested to discontinue his visits. His presence in the chateau was, in fact, totally unexpected by anyone until he was discovered in Madame Roupell's chamber."

M. Lablanche now threw a searching glance around the chamber. It would seem, indeed, as if nothing could escape his acute observation. On the large, handsome bedstead, lay the body of the late proprietress of the Chateau Villeneuve. This piece of furniture was nearly in the center of the room, with the head placed against the wall. To the east two windows looked out upon the grounds in the rear of the building. An aviary, containing several canaries, which had been great favorites of the dead woman, stood between the windows. Its occupants were singing merrily, apparently unmindful that the hand which had fed and tended them was powerless to do so more. In the windows, stands of geraniums and other plants were tastefully arranged, and the heavy curtains had been carefully drawn back to permit the free ingress of the sunlight. On the toilet table lay the gloves which Mme. Roupell had worn at the opera the preceding evening. There, also, was the fan which she had carried. On one of the chairs was the shawl which Emily Weldon had wrapped about her.

(To be continued.)

Unavoidable.

In the early years of his ministry Bishop Bascomb, of the Southern Methodist Church, was severely handicapped, says the author of "Women of the Confederacy," by the fact that he was handsome and graceful. He was considered "too much of a dandy," and for a long time was sent on mountain circuits to bring him down to the level of old-fashioned Methodism.

As a last resort, when he continued to appear "dandified," one of his mountain members persuaded the minister to wear a suit of homespun, that he might be more in harmony with his listeners. The next morning he went early to service to see the success of his scheme.

When Mr. Bascomb appeared, as trig in homespun as he had been in broadcloth, the mountaineer's chagrin was intense.

"Well, I declare!" he exclaimed. "Go it your own way, Brother Bascomb. I give it up. It ain't your clothes that's so pretty; it's just you."

The Call.

"You know," said Mrs. Subbubs, "that Mrs. Newcome moved in across the way last Monday, so I called to-day."

"Well, well!" remarked her husband, "how like poker this 'social game' is!"

"You do you mean?"

"Why, in poker you also call when you want to see what the other person's got"—Philadelphia Press.

The building located at the greatest height in Europe is the climber's hut on the Matterhorn, nearly 12,500 feet above the sea.

RYHME OF THE PUMPKIN PIE.

'Tis a dish that the gods Mars, Apollo and Jove,
In their pinkest days might be envious of;
Where the milk and the honey of plenty
Combine
To fashion a dish most deliciously fine.
When the spell of November is gray upon earth,
And the howling storm spirit comes out of the north,
Then the heart is made glad, tho' forbidding the sky,
By the taste and the sight of the rich pumpkin pie.

Dear time-honored dish that our grandmothers made,
Ere the red man was gone and the forests were laid;
When the sound of the warwhoop was heard in the land,
And the Puritan tolled with his musket at hand;

When towering Wantaguet saw to ascend the silent smoke signals that spoke of the end;
And the bear and the panther, the lynx and the fox
Held revels of blood in its storm-smitten rocks.

You are dainty as then, in those autumn's With crust like a snowflake and center of gold.
With the spices of India lying deep in your heart,
You are jewel and crown of the housekeeper's art.

Let the angustant wall, if he will, The homage, yours justly, we'll offer you
And ever this toast we'll repeat till we die—
"All hail and long life to the brave pumpkin pie!"

Through your hills, O November, are barren and bleak,
And waiting the winds in your forests which speak
One charm we will cherish—yes, keep till we die—
The pride of New England—the good pumpkin pie.

A Happy Thanksgiving

The good people of the church had decided that something must be done, and at once. The treasurer, a young man, who had recently come to the village, had made a financial statement that October Sunday morning, upon which certain persons felt very much scandalized. Such a thing had never been done before—not even thought of; then it revealed the fact that the Rev. Wesley Norwood had received but \$51.75 for six months of faithful service.

"I don't believe in bringing up such matters in the religious services of the church," growled Brother Cook, who always protested that it was a waste of money to pay the minister so much salary.

"I quite agree with you," responded Mr. Barnes. He was not a member of the church, but attended because it was a respectable thing to do—gave you standing. "If these things must come up every Sunday, I shall attend church elsewhere."

Notwithstanding this, it was generally agreed that it was a shame, and something must be done. But when things had gone in a haphazard way so long it was no easy matter to face right about. After several weeks of deliberation, the necessary something seemed as far from accomplishment as ever.

"It's too bad that they do not collect the pastor's salary," remarked Mrs. Hunter at the Ladies' Aid meeting. Who she meant by this was not entirely clear, inasmuch as she was one of the officers.

"If no one else will do anything, we must," rejoined Mrs. Allen; the various members nodded approval.

It was soon planned. The pastor had received \$51.75; they would pay him \$58.25—make it even \$150—and have enough left in the treasury for incidental matters. On Thursday evening of next week, which was Thanksgiving, they would invite themselves to the parsonage and have a good time while making the pastor happy. It would be easy to prepare something extra while getting ready for Thanksgiving. It was to be a grand secret; not a soul but members of the society should know a word of it.

At the close of the business meeting of the Young People's League, the president made a close scrutiny to assure himself that all present were members; he then proposed that, as "they would not do anything," the League take up the matter.

"I understand that we have nearly sixty dollars in the treasury; we could pay the pastor \$48.50—bring the salary up to \$100—and have enough left to pay all bills and begin the new year out of debt. If we do this I suggest that we observe the utmost secrecy and make it a complete surprise." All readily agreed to the plan and pledged the proper reticence in the matter.

Four of the most faithful met after prayer meeting to discuss the situation, and decided that they must at once collect \$248.25, the balance necessary to pay the six months' salary due. This they proceeded to do so quietly that no one surmised a general canvass was being made. Before Sunday the entire amount was secured.

Friday, after school, the Junior Leaguers met and decided that inasmuch as the grown-up folks would not help in the matter, they would do what they could; so they voted to pay over every bit there was in the treasury. Upon counting \$23.25 was found to be the correct amount.

"Oh, girls!" cried Lottie Newman, as she made some figure in the treasurer's book. "It will make just even \$75 and I hope we can get enough to make it a hundred."

After the choir had run over the Sunday hymns, someone proposed that they pay the proceeds of the last concert on the salary. The sum of \$30.25; after referring to the margin of his anthem book, the chorister reported that it would make \$82 all told. On Thanksgiving morning they would call at the parsonage and surprise the pastor with a check for this amount. Perhaps it would somewhat atone for the sin of whispering during the sermon.

Thanksgiving day was a trying time for the Norwoods. The baby was sick the night before and kept them awake; and when they did get to rest, they overslept. What with rushing to get breakfast over and make ready for the service at church, prayers were shortened and the chapter omitted altogether.

"Oh, Wesley, I am so tired! Everything has gone wrong to-day," said Mrs. Norwood that afternoon. "The children never were so naughty before. What will people say about Robbie fighting? The

flour barrel is empty, the potatoes are all gone, and we have not a thing in the house for breakfast, only bread and butter; and the grocer sent us word yesterday that we could not have another thing until we paid him. What shall we do?" After which lengthy and somewhat incoherent speech, she laid her head on his shoulder and found refuge in tears.

"Never mind, dear; the Lord will provide," then he slowly added, as if in an afterthought, "some way."

A few minutes later Pastor Norwood was bowing to the organist, who slipped a check in his hand and said properly, "With the compliments of the choir." Just as they were seated, the door bell rang again, and this time the Junior League marched en masse and the astonished minister stood speechless with a check in either hand. Then the older League came, and presently the Ladies' Aid, and last of all the trustees, all adding their offerings and crowding the small rooms. Each party looked stiffly askance at the others, wondering by what trickery their secret had become known.

After an hour of discourse and song, the treasurer arose and said:

"A few days since our pastor had received but a mere pittance for many months of faithful labor. While he had wrought earnestly for the church and its societies, so that, for the first time in years, all were in a prosperous condition, he unselfishly forgot his own needs. No, no! Brother Norwood, you must permit me to finish. Then one society and another, by some strange coincidence, conceived the thought of giving the pastor a pleasant Thanksgiving surprise. It is needless to say that we have surprised each other quite as well. But best of all, I find that in the few days of unconscious co-operation, we have increased the amount paid on salary to just five hundred dollars. This shows what we can do if we all work together. I move you as a congregation, that we increase our pastor's salary from six hundred to eight hundred dollars a year."

It was carried with a rush, even Brother

garbed Chinese host, to whom one of the party at some time has rendered a service or extended a courtesy.

HOW TO CARVE A TURKEY.

Sharp Knife of Greatest Importance in Cutting Up Fowl.

Some are born carvers, some are made. A few achieve carving and some fortune few—have carving thrust upon them. In order to become skillful in the art it is of the first importance to have a sharp knife.

Daniel Webster, so the story goes, undertook to carve the turkey at an old-fashioned dinner. The knife was dull as the traditional hoe and the bird proved refractory, giving the great man more trouble than one of his celebrated campaign speeches. Finally, after an especially desperate effort to cut through the hide of the troublesome fowl, the knife slipped and the bird turned a complete somersault and landed in the lap of a lady who sat next to the famous man. But even after this effort Mr. Webster never turned a hair.

"Madam, I'll trouble you for that turkey," said he, and went at the struggle again with might and main.

But we are not all born with the plumb of the great orator, so it is as well to take the precaution to have the knife sharp.

The turkey should always be served on a platter large enough to hold the different joints as they are carved. It should be placed on the table with the breast to the left of the carver, who commences operations by first getting a firm grip on the fowl by sticking the carving fork deep down through the upper part of the leg bone. Now, holding the fork securely in the left hand, take the knife in the right and remove the legs and the second joint together by passing the knife around to joint next the body. Then take off the wings in the same manner and dispose them, cutting through the ligaments. Before carving more from the turkey

PRIDE GOETH BEFORE A FALL.



—Cincinnati Post.

er Cook assenting, Pastor Norwood arose, and with tears of joy trickling down his cheeks, thanked them simply. Some said they sang the doxology as never before; at least there were two voices that rang out with a new inspiration of faith.

When they were once more at home, and the children in bed, Wesley Norwood again took his wife in his arms and opening his Bible at a place much marked and worn, they read together with the guileless faith of children, "And it shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear."

Thanksgiving of the Chinese.

As we learn more of this curious people, we are inclined to think that down in the narrow streets of Chinatown there is more real poetry than one would suspect from the matter-of-fact appearance and actions of the inhabitants. The average American, in the rush of metropolitan life, forgets all about the moon unless there is an eclipse, and even then there are ten chances to one that he knows nothing about it until he reads the paper next day.

With the Chinese it is different, says Leslie's Weekly. As their fathers did before them, so do they, and so will their children—for it takes more than a century to eradicate a deeply rooted belief—pay tribute to the sun and the moon and the stars.

On the fifteenth day of the eighth month in the Chinese calendar, which, according to the American method of computing time, was this year about the first week in September, the Chinese celebrated their annual moon festival and thanksgiving. In the country, where the good, old-fashioned Yankee farmers still continue to plant their peas and beans in the different times of the moon, so that they shall grow right, that body at this time of year is called the harvest moon; so it is the harvest moon that determines the date of the festival, which is much like the Thanksgiving of America and England and the Meizelupp of the Germans. The day preceding and the day following the night of the full moon the Chinese set aside for the feasting and merrymaking. There is no suspension of business, for the celebrating is all done after nightfall. The thanksgiving days are considered a good time to pay off monetary debts as well as social, for such a practice promotes domestic felicity and hastens prosperity. It is not unusual during moon-festival week to see a large party of Americans entertained by a gayly

The Turkey Supply.

Ten fat turkeys standing in line. Along comes Thanksgiving—Then there were but nine.

Nine fat turkeys weeping o'er their fate. Along comes Christmas—Then there were but eight.

One fat turkey—hen laying eggs pale. Along comes an incubator—Then there's plenty more.—W. J. Lampton in the Bohemian.

The Sunday After.



First Boarder (dreamily)—Altho' Thanksgiving is over, yet its memory lingers with us for days to come.

Second Boarder (practically)—I don't say you refer to the hash.

In the Bird Court.



The Judge—Now, sir. What is your excuse for not wishing to serve on the jury?

The Turkey—Please, your honor, I'm opposed to capital punishment.