

# The Roupell Mystery

By Austyn Granville

## CHAPTER I.

It was a fine night toward the latter part of May. During the daytime there had been clouds over Paris; but on the approach of evening the sun had come out, and, descending in a blaze of glory, tinged the housetops with a fiery glow and burnished the waters of the Seine with a golden, mellow light. The small suburb of Villeneuve, distant from the French capital but fourteen miles, shared this generous halo of brilliant coloring. It lacked just fifteen minutes of eleven o'clock when the moon, which was nearly at the full, rose with slow and majestic motion above the horizon, and hung suspended between earth and heaven like a huge silver lamp. The great trees which almost surrounded the chateau Villeneuve cast across the smooth and velvety lawns their deep shadows. From the chateau itself, the light of a solitary lamp, pulsing to a few mere twinkling rays, shone fitfully. It came from a window in the left wing of the building. Remote from the great metropolis, the hush of a profound peace was here upon everything, save when stirred by the soft breeze from the south, the leafy branches of tenderest green rustled and moved gently to and fro.

In the deep shade of an enormous oak which seemed to keep watch and ward over the sleeping inmates, stood a young man named Charles Van Lith, to whom every familiar object but conjured up to his ardent imagination the interior of that faintly illuminated apartment. This silent watcher continued to gaze for some moments in the direction of the chateau. His demeanor was that of one undecided as to what course to pursue. Twice he stepped from the shadow of the tree and placed his foot upon the gravel walk, and as many times retraced his footsteps.

At length he issued forth more boldly, though not without caution, to prevent the crunching of his shoes upon the gravel, and stood beneath the window. Picking up two or three small pebbles, he threw them against the glass. His heart beat somewhat faster than its wont as, after the third essay, a girl of about nineteen years of age, who had been reading by the light of the lamp, left her seat and, opening the swinging casement, looked out upon the night.

"Who is there?" she asked, in a tone which indicated some alarm, but singularly sweet and musical.

"It's I—It's Charles," replied the young fellow; "don't be frightened. I must see you, if only for a moment. I am going away. I am leaving France. I return to America to-morrow."

"Oh, nonsense," exclaimed the girl. "You are saying this just to try me."

"I am not, upon my word, Harriet," answered Van Lith. "My passage is already taken. I sail from Havre to-morrow afternoon."

"Why did you not let me know earlier?" she asked.

"I was afraid to write. You know your aunt strictly forbade it. But, Harriet, can't I get in, if only for a few moments?"

"I really don't see how you can—" Harriet Weldon began, when the faint remonstrance died away upon her lips.

Seizing the strong stem of a thick vine which ran near the window, and assisted by the trellis work, the young athlete below commenced an ascent which to an older man would have proved an impossible feat. In a few moments his hand was on the window sill and the next instant he had leaped lightly into the chamber. Harriet, the first raptures of their meeting over, begged him to be gone; but he, sitting beside her on the low window seat, urged his plea for further time so eloquently that she yielded, and could not find it in her heart to dismiss him at once. The lovers, too, had a hundred confidences to interchange. Harriet told Van Lith how, since his quarrel with her aunt, the persecutions of a certain M. Chabot had become well-nigh intolerable. She was afraid, moreover, that Mme. Roupell favored his suit.

"And now you are going to America, Charles, and there will be no one to stand between us. I am sure the man has not even the excuse of loving me. It is my dowry he is after. He is, no doubt, aware that Madame Roupell has made a will in favor of Emily and myself."

Charles Van Lith could only clench his fist in impotent rage. To the house where he had once been an honored and welcome guest he now had to come like a thief in the night to seek a farewell interview with the only being on earth who yet loved and trusted him. In his mind there was a burning sense of injustice. The cold and severe tones in which Mme. Roupell had dismissed him seemed still ringing in his ears.

"Do not go," pleaded Harriet. "I am certain that it will not be long before my aunt will relent; that, after all, she really thinks a great deal of you; stay, and I will myself go to her on the first opportunity which offers and plead your cause."

"You are more hopeful than I am," replied Van Lith, bitterly. "If I had been treated with any show of justice, why, I would not care. But your aunt is prejudiced against me. I am well aware that Monsieur Chabot has sought to undermine her confidence in me, and he has succeeded. I tell you, Harriet, when I think of all these things it makes me a desperate man."

He had been pacing the floor restlessly with long, impatient strides. His face was flushed with anger. With the memory of Mme. Roupell's merciless treatment aroused anew within him, he could hardly restrain himself.

"She is worse than unjust," he con-

tinued; "she has deliberately opened her ears to these tales of Chabot's and as deliberately shut them to my explanations. She has magnified my smallest misdemeanors into great faults."

"You must not blame my aunt to me, Charles. Recollect that to us girls, at least, she has ever been good and kind. I wonder what would have happened to us when mother died, if it hadn't been for her? Few women would have crossed the ocean as she did to fetch us, for her dead sister's sake; and she has been as good as a mother to us ever since. No, Charles, you mustn't say a word against Aunt Ruth in my hearing."

"Harriet," he said, "you are quite right to stand by her. It would be but a poor return on your part for all her kindness to you if you didn't; but in wronging me she has wronged you as well. In opposing our union, she not only wrecks my happiness, but yours."

He was quieter presently. In the softening influence of Harriet Weldon's presence his evil genius seemed to desert him. The angry expression of his features relaxed. They sat side by side and began to talk. Still pleading with him, Harriet Weldon strove to persuade her lover to abandon his intention of immediately leaving France.

"I have given you all my heart," she said, tearfully, "and now you are going away, perhaps forever—but hark, what sound is that?"

She leaned out of the window and listened intently for a moment. The sound of wheels on the carriage drive was distinctly audible. She rushed to the mantelpiece where a little clock stood ticking away the precious moments.

"It is long past twelve," she exclaimed. "That's their carriage we hear. They've come back from the opera. O, Charles, go, go, I beg you, while you can get away."

Van Lith turned at once to go. For a moment only, he held her to his breast. Into that brief interval of time were compressed a hundred different emotions, which stirred him as he had not been stirred for many a day.

"I cannot, yet I must leave you," he cried.

He bowed his head a little and kissed her twice upon the lips. She trembled violently, but thrust him away from her, repeating in tones of entreaty:

"Be careful! O, do be careful!"

He was himself once more. He placed the half-fainting form of the girl upon the sofa, and hurried away. He was about to commence his descent from the window, and had already swung the old-fashioned, diamond-paned sash half way open, when Harriet, in whose agitated mind the fear of discovery overcame all feminine weakness, rushed forward, and, catching hold of his arm, exclaimed:

"You are too late! Come back. Be quick, or you will be seen."

Van Lith had just time to close the window when, through a chink in the curtains, he saw a hooded barouche, drawn by two powerful horses, sweep rapidly around the bend of the avenue and draw up at the main entrance of the chateau. From the vehicle there alighted a gentleman of about thirty years of age. With a great show of attention he first assisted a young lady, evidently still in her teens, to descend. He then with much solicitude placed his nattily gloved hand at the disposal of the third occupant of the carriage, a gray-haired lady, evidently well advanced in years, for she leaned heavily upon the shoulders of both her companions. She shivered slightly as she stood upon the gravel path in the moonlight, notwithstanding that the night was warm.

There were traces yet of extreme beauty in this woman's features, who, as Sarah Graham, had once been the toast of the club rooms in fashionable New York. It was still the face of a refined and cultured American lady. The nose was thin and aquiline, and an expression at once haughty, yet kindly, withal, sat upon the mobile, nervous lips. Jewels flashed upon her still firm neck and her little wrists. She held herself erect and her eyes flashed proudly, as she looked upon her splendid home.

"Emily, my dear, I have left my shawl in the carriage. Will you please hand it to me? Monsieur Chabot, your arm."

The younger lady at once sprang lightly into the carriage, and returning with the shawl, wrapped it closely about her aunt. There was an inexpressible tenderness in the action.

"How thoughtless of me, dear. You might have taken cold. Don't ring, Monsieur Chabot. I have a latch key. Ah, here is Pierre. Pierre, are you sitting up? I hope there's some supper ready, for I'm hungry as I can be. Come, aunt; let's go in."

But something seemed to have attracted Mme. Roupell's attention. She withdrew her hand from the arm of her male escort, and adjusting her monocle, a dainty toy of gold and ivory, gazed steadily at the upper windows of the chateau.

"Isn't it rather strange, my dear, that there's a light in Harriet's room? I thought she was going to bed. If her headache was no worse than that, she might as well have accompanied us this evening. When I was a young girl, Monsieur Chabot, it would have taken something more than a headache to keep me away from the opera."

M. Chabot smiled, and showed his white teeth pleasantly.

"Madame can still teach us inexperienced people how to enjoy life," he remarked, gallantly. "It remained for the United States to send to France another Napoleon D'Enclos, to prove that charming

women never grow old."

"Really, Monsieur Chabot, I am overwhelmed. For simplicity and naturalness in compliment, my dear Emily, let me recommend this flatterer."

Mme. Roupell's favorite pastime was to make M. Chabot believe that his exaggerated praises of her as a great lady struck home. One of her sayings was, "I like Monsieur Chabot. He is such a sincere humbug," but she must have really been a little moved on this occasion, for her smooth, white fingers on the Frenchman's coat sleeve tightened their pressure and her face lightened wonderfully.

Harriet, sheltered by the window curtains, looked at Van Lith, who ground his teeth so furiously that, notwithstanding the gravity of the situation, the girl could not forbear laughing. Mme. Roupell below was still smiling at the Frenchman's compliment.

"Let us go inside," she said, at last. "No doubt we shall find some supper somewhere. Poor Harriet! I trust she is not sick. I will go right upstairs and see how she is."

"That's comforting tidings, anyway," thought Van Lith, who had again cautiously opened the window, and to whom, as he peered through the curtains, every word uttered by the party below was distinctly audible. "Look here, Harriet, what on earth am I to do? Madame Roupell is coming to see how you are. In a minute she will be here."

Harriet's cheeks blanched for a moment, for from her station near the door of the chamber she could already hear Mme. Roupell's footsteps ascending the stairs.

"Come here," she cried to Van Lith, frantically. "There is no one sleeping in your old room. Run across the hall quickly, and hide yourself there until I call you. I will lock you in, so my aunt will have to go the other way. You must return through her sitting room to the corridor. You can do it easily, for she is a sound sleeper."

Van Lith did as he was directed. Harriet had barely time to turn the key on him, return to her chamber, seat herself and snatch up a book, when her aunt's footsteps were heard in the corridor, and a moment later the old lady entered the apartment.

"Awake yet, my dear child? Can't you sleep? Oh! You are thinking of that young scamp, I'm afraid. Well, I wouldn't if I were you. He isn't worth it. Besides, if you don't go to bed earlier where will the roses go to?"

She stooped and kissed her niece tenderly on both cheeks, and then went to the window.

"I mustn't keep the horses out all night. Jean! Jean!"

The coachman turned on the box and looked up at the window.

"You can go to the stables. Monsieur Chabot will not return to the city to-night."

Mme. Roupell closed the window again and came back to where her niece was sitting.

"Monsieur Chabot sleeps here to-night?" inquired Harriet, in a tone of apparent unconcern, while her heart was really beating violently. "Where will you put him, aunt?"

"Can't he have Monsieur Van Lith's old room, dear?"

"Not very well. But the chamber of your own is ready, and the sheets are aired."

"Very well, child, then I will give directions that he be lodged there. And now good-night. Don't sit up reading; but try to sleep."

Mme. Roupell turned and left the apartment. It was the last benediction that was to fall from the lips of Harriet Weldon's benefactress; for the shadow of an awful crime was even then hovering over the chateau.

(To be continued.)

**A Plague of Clocks.**  
We had been settled but a little while in our Indian clearing, and had just acquired a deed to it bearing the signature of Andrew Jackson, says "Joquin" H. Miller in the Boston Transcript, when one day a big, raw-boned, hatchet-faced man in a beaver hat came to us by way of the State road, with a load of clocks in a carriage. He had a big, impertinent boy with him, and pleaded sadly that both of them were sick.

Mother was very good to them, pulled out the trundle-bed to the middle of the floor, had us children sleep at the foot of her bed, and treated the strangers as if they had been her own blood. But they both walled and moaned bitterly, and begged father to take the clocks and dispose of them at his leisure to his neighbors.

There was a whole carriage load of them, but upon the reiterated assurance that he could double, and even treble, his money, our confiding father, not knowing one thing about the real price or value of such wares, signed a note and became a "merchant." At the end of the year that hatchet-faced man came back and exacted his money with enormous interest, although father had not yet sold a single clock.

Years later, when we set out to cross the great plains, those old clocks, with but a single one missing, took up more than half the wagon space. We hauled them from Indiana almost to the top of the Rocky Mountains, and then, one night, in a terrific snow-storm, when the wagon had upset, we found a use for them. Brass, wood, glass and varnish all went to feed a fire. And so peace to their sounding brass, rest to their brazen faces!

There are 527 distinct muscles in the human body, of which eighty-three are in the head and face.

## RAREST OF ALL KNOWN ANIMALS



FIRST PHOTO OF A OKAPI.

That interesting creature, the okapi, allied to the giraffe, and discovered by Sir Harry Johnston on the eastern border of the Congo forest (near the Semliki River, which joins the Albert Nyanza and the Albert Edward Lake), had never been observed and studied by a white man in its living state until five months ago—when a young calf okapi about a month old was obtained by Signor Ribotti at Bambilli, on the Evelle River (about 400 miles northwest of the original locality). The picture is that of a living okapi, a calf about a month old. The photograph is the first that has ever been taken of a living specimen.

## WOMEN AND BASEBALL.

### One of the Sex Explains Why She Doesn't Know Game Very Well.

"I don't see that it's much wonder if women don't know a great deal about that game of baseball," remarked a Cleveland woman in the role of an abused wife the other day to a Plain Dealer man. "If all men were like my husband it would be a fine chance any wife would have to learn anything besides household drudgery. I think it's absolutely absurd the way some men seem to lose all control of their senses and all idea of ordinary courtesy when they get within sight of a crowd of men knocking a ball about a big pasture."

"I've always been so bored to death by baseball games the few times my husband has persuaded me to go, because I never could tell who was winning, that I told my husband I wouldn't go to any more of the old games with him. Then the other day he told me that if I'd go he would just make it his business for that one day to explain the game to me."

"Well, he started in to explain things to me, and his mood lasted just until some one hit the ball, and then he began to shout and jump up and down as if some one had booked an electric wire to his seat. I thought something very unusual must have happened and I tried to get him to tell me what he was acting so foolish about, but he just snapped out: 'This is too good a game. I'll tell you all about it when we get home.' And that was all I could get out of him during the rest of the tiresome old game. I'll never go to one with him again."

### Pet of the Permian Days.

One of the most startling fossil wonders ever unearthed is just now creating a veritable sensation and arousing widespread scientific and popular interest in New York at the Museum of Natural History, writes Lillian E. Zeh in Technical World Magazine. This is due to efforts of Professor Henry F. Osborn, who has placed on exhibition a complete reconstruction of one of the oldest, and most extraordinary four-footed creatures that ever trod earth. This ancient animal hitherto practically unknown to the outside world, called naosarus, or the carnivorous finback lizard, inhabited the region of Texas in the Permian age, estimated to have been, according to geological reckoning, anywhere from twelve to twenty millions of years ago. The fin-back lizard was a most formidable creature, terrifying in appearance and possessing a mouth eighteen inches in length and armed with terrible tusks.

### Not a Clean Sweep.

The hurricane blew the big trees down, An' we saw the steeple fall; An' the earthquake swallered one-half the town, But it didn't swaller us all!

The rain come down fer forty days, Till it hid the pine trees tall; But we're thinkin' o' singin' a song o' praise— Fer it didn't drown us all! —Atlanta Constitution.

### Always Late.

Blacksmith—Tha knows 'im. 'E was t' mayor one year. Old Man—Nay, 'e never got as 'igh as that. 'E wor nobbut ex-mayor.—Punch.

How a thief must laugh to read in the papers that the \$5 watch he stole the night before is valued at \$200 by its owner.

## DYSPEPSIA AND DESTINY.

### Men Who Neglected Their Bodies Failed When Success Was Nigh.

Man has a machine, an apparatus of delicate adjustment, but of great power—his body—but too often he neglects to use it, says the Boston Globe. He lets it rest in ease or slumber in sloth. He coddles it. He arrays it in fine linen and purple, bedizens it with jewels and pampers it with indigestible foods, often sparing it the arduous labor of mastication. He permits it to sit awkwardly with crossed legs or stooped shoulders, as if the trunk was too fragile to hold up its limbs, or the weight of the atmosphere was an Atlas load for its back.

And what reward hath the mind for this indulgence granted the sybarite flesh? Ingratitude and complaining accompanied by accusations. The poor, debilitated muscles and nerves justly charge that the overseer mind has been neglectful of its duties and, despising so weak and ignorant a foreman, desert or rebel, and leave their should-be boss impotent to carry out the true work of a man.

The marvelous mind of Alexander, which ruled a world, had no discipline for its body after it became acquainted with oriental pomp and seriousness, and disregarded the stalwart virility with which in other days it tamed Bucephalus.

Napoleon, busy with rearranging the map of Europe, did not properly masticate his chicken à la Marengo and allowed it to pass in the rough into the spoiled child of a stomach, trusting to the liver—a weak one inherited from his father—to complete the lack of mastication.

Probably the great disaster of Leipzig was due to his careless eating.

Voltaire has said the fate of a nation often depended on the good or bad digestion of a prime minister, and Motley declares that the gout of Charles V. changes the destinies of the world. Balzac, incomparable novelist, died at 50 when he had planned for a life of rural rest, died because he allowed the craving stomach to have coffee at all hours and in great quantities; and while his mind sauntered in all the highways, lanes and alleys of human society, his body, cabined in a monk's robe, took no exercise, but stuck to a garret, except when a sheriff's approach made flight a thing desired by the agile mind.

In that delightful essay, "Salts and Their Bodies," Colonel Higginson says: "Three of the four Greek fathers ruined their health early and were invalids for the rest of their days. Three only of the whole eight were able-bodied men—Ambrose, Augustine and Athanasius—and the permanent influence of these three has been far greater than that of all the others put together."

"He is born for a minister," New England parents once said of the puny twigs of the family tree, while they deputed the lusty limbs to bear the buffets of secular storms.

Luther scoffed at Juvenal's axiom of "A healthy mind in a healthy body"—an axiom commended to the degenerate Romans—but other religious leaders have welcomed and heeded the warning contained in the saying of the great satirist. If Calvin was an invalid all the days of his life, George, Michael and Martin were robust. If some noted prelates have not treated their bodies as they ought, we have seen even a delicate Leo XIII. illustrate to the letter, "mens sana in corpore sano."

### In the Wrong Church.

An absent-minded woman one Sunday morning walked into church, took a front seat and joined in the service vigorously, according to the Chicago Inter-Ocean. Then the collection basket was passed to her, and, putting a coin into it, she looked about. She cast glances in every direction, her mind cleared, and an expression of amazement overspread her face. She got up. She hurried down the aisle. She overtook the man with the collection basket. "I'm in the wrong church," she whispered, and taking out the coin she had put in, she hurried forth.

### Question for Question.

"Farthest north, hey?" sneered the lawyer. "Why don't you go clear to the pole?"

"Why don't you close up that will case that you've been living on for the last sixteen years?"—Washington Herald.

### Allday's Needed Nowadays.

"Why do you send two men to get that interview?" asked the managing editor.

"One of them," answered the city editor, "is a notary public."—Pittsburg Press.

### Wins the Job.

"She is fitting herself for a position to apply for a job as typewriter." "Patronizing a shorthand school?" "No, a beauty doctor."—Pittsburg Press.

Daniel Osiris, the Jewish banker and philanthropist of Paris, who recently died, left a will in which he disposed of \$18,000,000, giving \$5,000,000 to the Pasteur Institute.