

The Roupell Mystery

By Austyn Granville

CHAPTER VI.—(Continued.)

The doctor and Emily Weldon continued to slowly promenade up and down the terrace. United by that secret bond of sympathy which oftentimes brings two natures together unconsciously, they experienced an indefinable comfort in each other's society.

A solitary figure, that of some worthy burgher of Paris, attracted, doubtless, to Villeneuve by the sensational reports in the newspapers, was the only living object that was in view. Looking at him the doctor observed:

"There is no gauging the depth of human curiosity."

"That is so. There have been several here since—" and she glanced up to the darkened chamber above, with a shudder. "They walk in and out as if they owned the place. He looks like a retired tradesman of some kind. He is pretty cool for a trespasser. See, he has seated himself on the turf, and is throwing bread to the swans."

"Don't disturb him," said the doctor. "See with what care he spreads that red handkerchief over his knees. He has taken out some sandwiches, and is evidently enjoying them."

Miss Weldon again smiled. It was really quite ludicrous to watch the old gentleman from Paris. He appeared to be totally oblivious of the presence of the people on the terrace. Having eaten his sandwich, he presently arose and threw the crumbs adhering to his handkerchief to the expectant swans. The doctor laughed outright; so loudly, indeed, as to apparently attract the attention of the old gentleman who, glancing but once in their direction with an indignant air, walked away and disappeared among the trees.

A half hour more elapsed and still M. Cassagne did not come. Hardly able to conceal his irritation at the delay, Dr. Mason at length retired to the library, where he busied himself in some scientific calculations in which he had been abruptly interrupted by the startling news of the murder of Mme. Roupell. For an hour he remained oblivious to all else save sines, cosines, tangents, secants and cosecants. An abstruse trigonometrical problem was before him, and to its solution he was devoting himself heart and soul, when suddenly he became aware of an obstruction of the light from the window. Looking up, to his intense annoyance he perceived the inquisitive burgher from Paris, his nose flattened against the glass, staring vacuously into the apartment.

Anger was expressed in every feature of the physician's countenance as he threw the French window wide open; but the worthy burgher did not seem to be at all disconcerted. On the contrary, availing himself of the opportunity, before the doctor could stop him, he stepped over the low sill and entered the library.

"Sir, this unwarrantable intrusion at such a moment—" began the physician.

"May perhaps surprise you," interrupted the burgher; "but have you given orders about the truffles?"

The doctor stared with astonishment and stepped back two or three paces.

"You are," he gasped, "you cannot be Monsieur—"

"I am," replied the burgher, an indescribable twinkle in his eye, as he noted the doctor's amazement. "I am the person you are about to mention—Alfred Cassagne, the detective," and with a profound bow, he handed Dr. Mason his card.

CHAPTER VII.

Alfred Cassagne was the son of a large contractor, who had accumulated a considerable fortune in the construction of those remarkable docks in the city of Havre, which have helped to make that place the most important harbor of France. He lost his father when he was but twenty-two years of age, had left him amply provided for. But he had never married. Of quite a studious turn of mind, he had devoted himself to books, and might possibly have degenerated into a book worm, or have sunk so low as to become an author, if an event had not transpired which changed the whole current of his existence.

He awoke one morning to find that the cashier of a bank where he usually had a large balance, had absconded with the funds of that institution. Where he had gone, was equally a mystery to the police and the officers of the concern. Having considerable interest in the capture of the fugitive, Cassagne set about making inquiries on his own account. From these inquiries he quietly deduced his own theories, and one morning, to the intense astonishment of the chief of police, he entered the presence of that functionary and stated his opinion on the case very briefly. It was to the effect that the president of the bank and the cashier were in collusion, and that the cashier, whom most people believed to be by that time safely in America, that Mecca for European rogues, would be found hiding in the president's own private residence.

The chief of police had laughed at first; but Alfred Cassagne was permitted to proceed. It was known he was a gentleman of fortune; and men of means are never snubbed very badly anywhere. Very soon, moreover, the official grew serious. By a system of logical deduction from circumstances already known, Cassagne established his theory on a basis so ingenious as to excite the chief's warmest admiration. Subsequent search discovered that the state of things Cassagne had believed to exist in theory, was really true.

Alfred Cassagne might now possibly

have been forty years of age, though not disguised, owing to his smoothly shaven face, he appeared to be younger. He was rather above the middle height, and though somewhat narrow across the shoulders, the great depth of his chest made ample amends for this deficiency. His hair was cut very short to permit of his more readily wearing the various wigs by which he frequently concealed his identity. His mouth was well cut, the lips thin and somewhat pursed together, as is often the habit with men who pass much time in thinking. His nose was large and very prominent. His hands and feet small and rather delicate. His voice singularly soft and gentle; his manner that of a man entirely at ease, and of one who thoroughly understands his business.

He sat quite still in the easy chair to which Dr. Mason had motioned him on his arrival. It was not until the latter had given him the outlines of the case that he spoke at all, and then he said:

"We will begin by premising a certain state of facts. Madame Roupell has been murdered. Who did it? Public opinion says your friend Van Lith. I always mistrust public opinion. The prefect of police is not at all sure but Monsieur Chabot had a hand in it. I sometimes mistrust the prefect of police."

"You mean to imply that both may be wrong?" inquired the doctor.

"Yes, and if I am right, it leaves us confronting two alternatives."

"And they are?"

"Either that the unfortunate woman committed suicide while of unsound mind, or that the crime is the act of a third party to us at present unknown."

"I can dispose of the first of those suppositions immediately," said the doctor. "Madame Roupell's mind was as sound as yours or mine is at the present moment."

"Let us proceed to an examination of the body. I have provided myself with a written permit to break the seals," said the detective. "Lead the way, please."

They entered the chamber of death. Nothing had been disturbed since the visit of the prefect. Alfred Cassagne took a rapid survey of the room. He advanced to the bedside, and commenced a minute inspection of the body of the murdered woman.

He carefully removed the bandages from the wound in the head; he turned the body over so that the light from the window fell full upon the face of the dead woman, revealing in the strong sunlight each line and shadow already showing in their marked change of the lineaments the inevitable approach of decay. Taking out his penknife, Cassagne carefully removed one of the clots of blood which had accumulated near the entrance of the wound, and walking to the window examined it through a small magnifying glass which he took from his pocket. Presently he said:

"Doctor, look at that blood!"

Dr. Mason took the magnifying glass and the penknife and gazed steadfastly upon the little red gout.

"Do you see anything peculiar about it?" asked Cassagne. "Do you not notice an entire absence of natural crystallization?"

The doctor's face turned pale as a sheet; his lips twitched nervously.

"This crime grows more horrible and more mysterious than ever. It is impossible to mistake your meaning. This wound was inflicted after death," he exclaimed. "The blood is certainly what we call in the profession 'dead blood.'"

"And is that not often the case where a wound is inflicted when a person is in a comatose condition?"

"It might be," replied the physician. "I have known the phenomenon of total suspension of the circulation in comatose bodies."

"And in such case, would blood flowing from a wound crystallize or not?"

"It is possible that it might crystallize somewhat, if the person wounded, while in a comatose condition, was young and healthy. In the case of an old and feeble woman, like Madame Roupell, I should consider it extremely doubtful. In the present instance, by means of the glass, one can plainly discern that no crystallization has taken place."

"In fact, that this wound was inflicted after the wound which produced either death or insensibility?" said the detective.

"Exactly so," replied the physician.

"The question now is, where is that wound?"

"We will find it," said Cassagne. "Give me your help here."

"We had better look for a contusion of some sort. Insensibility could be produced by a sharp blow on the back of the head, or under the ear," remarked Dr. Mason.

"I am not of that opinion," replied Cassagne. "I have already looked there. There is no swelling of any kind on the back of the head, and as she is dressed in demi-toilette, it is easy to see that no injury has been inflicted to the upper part of the spinal cord."

"For what kind of wound shall we search? It must be a small one, indeed, to escape the examination of so good a surgeon as Monsieur Croiset."

"Unfortunately Monsieur Croiset," replied Cassagne, with a curious smile, "is a surgeon only. He is not a detective. He is good at generalizations; he falls in particulars. The wound we must look for, since you sound Monsieur Croiset's praises so highly, must be no larger than a pencil point. Have you never heard of the Venetian stiletto?"

"No, I cannot say that I have," answered Dr. Mason.

"It is an instrument made of toughened glass, no thicker than a knitting needle. When plunged into a victim, it can be broken short off in the flesh which closes around it, so that it is hard to tell how death supervenes. Many such deaths have undoubtedly been charged to apoplexy, and other causes."

"Is it possible?" ejaculated the physician.

"Not only possible but more than probable. Let us instantly begin our search for such a weapon. There will not be a drop of blood visible. Death generally ensues from internal hemorrhage, unless the stiletto reaches the heart, when, of course, the victim dies instantly. Turn her over on her face," said the detective. "She may have been wounded in the back."

This was done, and they carefully examined that portion of the body. For the first time Dr. Mason's blind faith in the skill of the man he had employed began to show signs of wavering. He little knew Cassagne's marvelous resources. The doctor had left the body and was standing over by the window, again examining the blood on the penknife through the magnifying glass. A slight exclamation from the bed caused him to glance in that direction.

He could hardly repress a cry of surprise. He held his breath almost, so anxiously did he await the result of an experiment that Cassagne had put in operation. With his eyes closed and with his head raised very much after the style of a blind man reading from a raised-letter book, the detective was moving his fingers, soft and delicate as a young girl's, over the cold, stiff body of the murdered woman. Dr. Mason knew in an instant that he was about to depend upon his sense of touch to find the tiny wound that his eyes had failed to detect.

For over a minute the two men remained in their relative positions. Then the voice of Cassagne was heard, breaking the silence, which had grown almost painful in its intensity:

"I am right. Madame Roupell was stabbed in the back."

CHAPTER VIII.

Dr. Mason, in his agitation, dropped the penknife and the magnifying glass and rushed to the bedside.

"Where is the wound?" he ejaculated. M. Cassagne, cool, calm and collected, still held one tell-tale finger, which, like a living eye, had detected a slight inequality in the surface of the flesh, firmly pressed down upon a spot no larger than a pin's head.

"Take it easy, doctor," he said, smiling at the agitation of the physician, "and if the magnifying glass is still unbroken, I will trouble you for it. The penknife also, if you please, doctor. Now," after he had gently pushed back the flesh with the point of the knife, "look through the glass, and tell me what you see."

"I see a rough, glistening surface."

"Try it with the point of the penknife."

The doctor took the knife, and scraped upon the hard surface thus exposed to view.

"It is glass," he exclaimed. "I haven't a doubt of it."

"It is the wound which caused death. You see it has penetrated the lumbar region. Death has been caused by two things. Shock and internal bleeding. Have you a small pair of pincers here? No? Well, then I must use my fingers."

M. Cassagne having enlarged the opening of the wound by dilatation, plunged his finger and thumb into the orifice and drew out, though not without much difficulty and after repeated failures, the broken piece of a small, sharpened glass stiletto. Its withdrawal from the wound was followed by a few drops of blood, which the doctor, who notwithstanding his professional experiences was greatly affected by the spectacle, was about to wipe reverently away, when he was stopped by the detective.

"Don't do that. That blood has a tale of its own to tell. I wish to examine it through the glass."

He took up some on the point of the knife, and the two men as before went to the window. Notwithstanding that it had not been exposed to the outer air, the blood was strongly crystallized.

"One thing is proved, and almost conclusively," exclaimed Cassagne. "It is the wound which caused her death. See how the blood is crystallized. Now to discover the assassin. The prefect's theory is that Madame Roupell was sitting at her desk writing, when the crime was committed. In support of that, he points to the scattered papers and the overturned chair. Now notice which way the chair has fallen."

"It has fallen toward the desk," said Dr. Mason.

"Precisely; and that proves to me that it was the murderer, not Madame Roupell, who was engaged in the examination of the papers."

"Why?"

"Because, had Madame Roupell been surprised from behind and stabbed, as we now believe to be the case, she would have fallen forward, and the chair would have been thrown backward or away from the desk, not toward it. Madame Roupell surprised this unknown person, perhaps while he was rifling the contents of her desk; springing to his feet he overthrew the chair, drew his stiletto, and advanced toward her. She doubtless turned to flee, too frightened to scream, and he then stabbed her in the back."

"I see; and having no other weapon than the stiletto, and that having been broken off short in the body, he fired at her to make sure of his work."

(To be continued.)

The total area of the British empire is nearly 11,400,000 square miles, or rather more than one-fifth of the earth's surface.

Science AND INVENTION

According to the evidence given recently by Dr. R. T. Williams, an English physician, in a London police court, he distinguishes seven stages of drunkenness—irritable, mellow, pugnacious, affectionate, lachrymose, followed, if the total doses were large enough, by collapse and death.

That the finest stone buildings and monuments of many cities are disintegrating through the action of the sulphuric acid produced by the combustion of coal is asserted by a writer in Cosmos (Paris). In London, especially, it has been estimated that no less than half a million tons of acid are thus discharged into the atmosphere yearly.

Scientists in Germany say that a substance has been prepared which shows the same radio-activity as that of radium bromide. It is said that the substance is uranyl molybdate. The molybdate is formed by adding ammonium molybdate to uranyl nitrate when a white amorphous powder separates. This is dried in the dark and apparently must be kept there, as it is unstable. Report says that it gives radio-active effects which are practically as intense as those given by radium. Though costly—namely, about \$110 an ounce—the price is not so enormous as that of radium, which has reached many thousands of dollars for the same quantity.

In countries like France, where roads are good and cross-roads numerous, travelers by automobile have frequent occasion to consult road maps, because they go so fast and change direction so often that topographical information is, for them, a continual necessity. To meet this an automatic chart has been invented, which unrolls in step with the advance of the carriage, so that the chauffeur has always before him a map of the route he is to pursue. When the road is about to turn sharply, an electric bell gives warning 300 meters in advance. Another attachment to the chart registers the distance traversed. The whole apparatus is moved by gearing connected with the wheels of the automobile.

Last winter Prof. E. E. Barnard photographed a most singular object in the constellation Taurus, the appearance of which suggests the term "dead nebula." It is a long, straggling mass, which seems to shut the stars behind it. All round it the stars are strewn thickly, but within its boundaries very few appear, and Prof. Barnard suggests that these may lie on this side of it.

At one point there is a small, bright nebula, which gradually fades out. "The feeblest portions of the nebula would almost suggest," says Prof. Barnard, "that a large nebula exists here, but that the major portion of it is dead or non-luminous." In some places the dark object is manifestly darker than the starless parts of the sky round it.

The green coloring matter contained in leaves and other parts of plants, and known as chlorophyll, serves as a light-screen through which only certain spectral colors are able to penetrate and to affect the internal organism of the plant. A somewhat puzzling fact is that some insects, such as the green grasshopper, possess a similar coloring matter, and the recent investigations of Podiopolosky have shown that this is identical in physical properties with the chlorophyll of plants. That its chemical construction is the same remains to be demonstrated. It is also a yet unsettled question whether "animal chlorophyll" serves, like that of plants, as a color-screen to shield the inner organism of the insects protecting it from the influence of certain colors.

Phases of the National Game.

There are two sides to almost anything, and the national game is far from being an exception. From the standpoint of the baseball enthusiast "our town has a club in the league." From the standpoint of the professional player the league has a club in each city. In the heart of the baseball patriot our club is a band of heroes, going out to conquer other cities and uphold our honor. In the mind of the man with soul so dead they are stock companies—properly financed. To the excited partisans at a game each player is an earnest contestant for his side. To the man who is from foreign parts it would be an important fact that they are hired men, employees with salaries set by companies that all belong to the same corporation, and that they get their pay for playing and not for winning. To the public it is a game. To the president of the company it may be a good or bad "performance."

—Century.

Conscience.

"You can't allus gib a man credit foh a clear conscience," said Uncle Eben, "because he looks cheerful. Dar is some people dat smiles de hardest after dey has put through de crookedest deals."—Washington Star.

AT THE FAIRY GODMOTHER'S

Girl Gained Impressions that Proved Precious in After Years.

To reach the fairy godmother's you went down the street to the still brown house, and up three flights of stairs, where you felt as if shivery things might happen, although they never did, and then suddenly—the open door and flood of sunlight—golden-green through the geraniums and ivies and wandering-jew that grew on shelves across the window—and the fairy godmother herself, her whole tiny figure aglow with welcome.

There were wonderful things in the fairy godmother's room—of course, how could it possibly be otherwise? There were carved ivory jack-straws, and a pen-wiper with apple-seed mice on bags of meal, and a marvelous picture of "Crowning the May-Queen" worked in worsted and cross-stitch, and entrancing amber beads with which one could "dress up," and a basket full of shells from the West Indies, and a sandalwood fan whose fragrance set one dreaming of palms and breadfruit-trees—at that time one's sole assets in the way of tropic scenery.

There were other things too less easily inventoried, although no less perceptible to a child's quick insight—a sense of peace, golden-green, one fancied, like the light in the room—a simple happiness gathered fresh each day, a lovely trust in the goodness of every human being.

The fairy godmother slipped away one night. She left behind her the jackstraws and the fan and the amber beads, and the child put them among her treasures. She remembered always the shock with which certain discoveries came to her later.

"Why, she was poor!" she said aloud one day. It was true, undoubtedly, in spite of the amber beads and the pen-wiper. And she must have been lonely often, she knew it, after meeting, years later, the brother with whom the fairy godmother had lived; and frail, the bright remembered face revealed before unconsidered marks of pain. The girl stood still, thrilled by a rush of tenderness.

"Oh, she was brave!" she cried; but even then she only dimly understood.

Years later, in the midst of her own difficult battle, she happened one day upon the amber beads. Life had not been easy—oh, it had been hard—hard! There were little bitter lines deepening about her mouth. She had not discovered them yet, but they were coming. Now suddenly her eyes softened and filled with tears.

"I have the beads," she said. "Can I not inherit, too, the courage and the trust? I will. If she could, I can and I will."

And so she took possession of her great heritage.—Youth's Companion.

BREEZES FOR THE OPERATOR.

New Attachment for Sewing Machines Operated by the Treadle.

At the time it was first introduced the fan attachment for rocking chairs was considered a novel idea. The possibilities of employing such a device for other purposes has been recognized by an Indiana inventor, as shown in the accompanying illustration. He conceived the plan of providing a similar

RUN BY PEDALS. attachment for sewing machines, whereby the operator can have the full benefit of balmy breezes while running the machine. The attachment is extremely simple, the fan being pivoted on a bracket secured to the back of the machine. The end of the handle of the fan connects by rod to the treadle. As the latter is worked up and down the fan is forced to do likewise, directing the breeze directly at the operator. The bracket supporting the fan is adjustable and can be clamped to the table in any position desired. This simple accessory would undoubtedly be welcomed by the thousands of girls operating sewing machines in factories, where conditions are not of the best.

Good Ground for Complaint.

"See here," grumbled the inmate of murderers' row, "ain't there a law agin cruel and unusual punishment?"

"Yes," answered the warden.

"An' ain't I goin' ter be hanged next week?"

"I'm afraid you are."

"Then what d'yer mean by sendin' me a bunch of story papers to read that ain't got nothin' but continued stories in 'em?"—Cleveland Leader.

Every One an Old Friend.

The Wife—What luck?

The Husband (wearily)—None whatever.

The Wife—Were there no servants in the intelligence office?

The Husband (sadly)—Lots of them, but they had all worked for us before.

—Woman's Home Companion.

Just for variety, try to make some one happy besides yourself.

