

The Roupell Mystery

By Austyn Granville

CHAPTER IX.—(Continued.)

The doctor was following this theory with breathless interest. "Go on," he said.

"He was about to retire as he came, when the thought occurred to him to divert suspicion from himself by placing the pistol he had picked up on his way through the rooms, near his victim. But there must be a report and a pistol wound. He raised the window, and noted the distance to the tree. He went over and fired the pistol at Madame Roupell, who was still insensible. Then he threw the pistol down and jumped from the window. We must search for the man in two places; in the haunts of the poor and in the palaces of the wealthy. We have little to guide us but the scraps of parchment and the gold locket I also found."

"Let me look at the locket," said the doctor. "Can you get it open? It may contain a lock of hair or something."

"I have already done that. It contains a picture," responded Cassagne. "I will show you."

The detective took a penknife and pried up the little gold lid. A small photograph was disclosed to view. It was the portrait of a man of about twenty years of age.

"What does this mean?" cried the doctor. "Henry Graham cannot have committed this murder. This is a portrait of Henry Graham himself."

"Impossible!" ejaculated the detective. "It is a fact," replied Dr. Mason. He ran into the drawing room, and picking up an album, turned the pages over rapidly. Finally he stopped at a certain photograph.

"That was Henry Graham when he was a decent member of society," he said. The detective put the locket down close to the photograph, and compared the two pictures carefully.

"There is no doubt whatever about it," he remarked. "You are right; they are portraits of one and the same man."

"Then it couldn't be Henry Graham?" inquired the physician. "A man doesn't carry a locket containing a picture of himself."

"It may not be Henry Graham at all," replied the detective. "I hope it isn't for the sake of the family; but he's the man we've got to look for first, and the sooner we find him the better your friend's prospects are of regaining his liberty."

CHAPTER X.

There are all kinds of men in Paris, all kinds of failures in life and all kinds of successes—the poor genius who dispatches himself in an attic, and the financial magnate. The Vicomte de Vallar was one of those gentlemen who might be placed in the latter category. At a bound he had risen from comparative obscurity to sudden wealth and such social position as his title, having its source in the king of the Belgians, could insure him in a society which cared rather more for good dinners than old blood.

The Vicomte de Vallar's great hit had been the successful floating of the City and Suburban Messenger Company. London had refused to accept this scheme, preferring to send its servants out into the rain and ruin its liveries, to having a little instrument in the house by which to summon at a trifling charge a messenger, a doctor or a cab. De Vallar, with an eye keen as a hawk, had watched the career of the enterprise in the English metropolis. He saw that it was unsuited to the phlegmatic and exclusive temperament of the Briton. In the American colony at Paris alone was to be found a successful field for its operations.

The projectors of the London company, Americans, were glad enough to sell the French patents. They even laughed in their sleeves at the vicomte, as they pocketed his cash, regarding him already as a ruined man. At the same time they could not help admiring his audacity. The Vicomte de Vallar was audacious, and he displayed consummate tact in putting his scheme before the public. He opened a large and showy office. He subsidized the most venal of the Paris newspapers; he pulled a thousand strings. Then, when all was ready, he opened his subscription books. Hundreds came to his office, rang up a messenger, and having subscribed, called up a cab on the queer little buzzing instrument, and departed rejoicing in their hearts that there were such enterprising men in existence as the Vicomte de Vallar.

All that was five years ago. Once floated, the vicomte had promptly withdrawn himself from the messenger enterprise, and invested the increased capital which that speculation had brought him, in the Mutual Credit and Trust Company. A very limited number of shares of this concern had been offered to the public. Such was the prestige of the vicomte's name that they had been subscribed for over and over again in a very few hours.

But it was not alone in the field of business that de Vallar had achieved such a remarkable success. The vicomtesse was a brilliant, dark-eyed, handsome woman, whom de Vallar claimed to have met abroad during his travels in the West Indies—Martinique, rumor had it. Her entertainments were much sought after, and who shall say that she was not a useful and excellent helpmeet? If a wealthy subscriber wavered, an invitation to the house where they could talk the matter over almost invariably resulted in the closing of the transaction. It was not possible that a man with such

an establishment—above all such a wife—could go wrong. If the vicomte's idea of an office was rather a loud one, the undoubted good taste of his wife corrected these things at home.

Those deep blue eyes of the vicomtesse were not the only attraction at the de Vallar mansion. There was always high play for those who relished that kind of thing, and a sprinkling of those ladies whom such a woman as the de Vallar, as she was familiarly called at the clubs, would be sure to gather around her. They were women of great personal attractions, some of them divorcees, others on the high road to that enviable state, the quasi-separation, which leaves the wife in a position to enjoy herself without danger of comment, and supplies her, under the French law, moreover, with the means of doing so.

Of the many frequenters of the vicomtesse's establishment in the Avenue Wagram perhaps M. Jules Chabot was as welcome a guest as any. His undoubted respectability made him an exceedingly desirable acquaintance. M. Chabot, on the other hand, liked the free-and-easy atmosphere of the de Vallar mansion. De Vallar was a man who always had some young, rich fool dangling after him, desirous of seeing life. A certain portion of the money only of these innocents could be diverted to the innumerable and mysterious uses of the Mutual Credit and Trust Company. They were then afforded an opportunity of losing the residue at the card tables in the Avenue Wagram.

Many, doubtless, who frequented the vicomtesse's establishment were totally unaware of the risks they ran. These were rarely suffered to go behind the curtain. M. Chabot was one of those who had for some time not been admitted to the privileged circle without great care. To do him justice, it is highly probable that if the veil had been removed all at once, he would have ceased his visits altogether. He lived in bachelor apartments. Profoundly impressed with a sense of his personal dignity, he endeavored on a very small income to keep up appearances. Lately, however, he had joined de Vallar in more than one investment by which he had profited.

The wily de Vallar, who had allowed his friend to pocket something handsome as his share of these enterprises, of course, had his object in view. What other, indeed, could it be than to discover all about Chabot's rich friend, Mme. Roupell, concerning whom M. Chabot was not at all loth to impart information, for he would in his turn be able to discover what probable dot the old lady would be able to give whichever of the girls he should choose to marry.

Such inquiries, the vicomte, whose position in the world of finance enabled him to make better than Chabot, willingly set on foot to oblige his friend. He assured M. Chabot that report had not exaggerated Mme. Roupell's wealth. That a portion of a million and a half of francs had been set apart for the Weldon sisters. In the opinion of M. Chabot, it only remained for him to declare himself to one or the other of the young ladies, and he had been, as the reader will have seen, on the very eve of making such a declaration to Emily Weldon when the tragedy occurred.

The question which now arose in the mind of M. Victor Lablanche, the astute prefect of police, was this: Had M. Chabot sought to precipitate matters by the removal of the proprietress of the Chateau Villeneuve? He had discovered already that inquiries regarding her fortune and her intentions respecting it had been set on foot by Jules Chabot. A little further research revealed the fact that the Frenchman's finances were in a desperate condition. In his later enterprises with the Vicomte de Vallar, fortune had not been so kind. He had lost heavily.

CHAPTER XI.

Five years before the tragedy at the Chateau Villeneuve, Charles D'Auburon had found himself the untrammeled possessor of a considerable patrimony, and had started in to enjoy life. He was then twenty-one years of age. Two years later he had exhausted every means of pleasure. He was at that age when a really good woman would have proved his salvation. She did not, however, make her appearance. He was destined to find relief in a more novel and totally unexpected direction.

The Rue Brodier is not a particularly attractive street either before or after midnight. The police will assure you that it is positively dangerous. Many a sunrise has revealed the body of some victim lying in its dark courts and noisome alleys. It is altogether a strange place for a young man of means, who by rights should at such an hour be snugly in bed and asleep, to be wandering in at three o'clock in the morning. It is the abode of robbers. Every house in it is a den of thieves. The Seine, running by at its foot with dark and turbid flood, is altogether too handy.

It was to this unattractive street that at an unseemly hour Charles D'Auburon strayed with unconscious feet. He had arisen from a sleepless bed, and had strolled far and near, intending to tire himself out. Then his reward would come; repose, sound and refreshing, and, glorious thought, perhaps an appetite, to which latter luxury he had been for some days a stranger.

He walked on, totally unconscious of danger, a thick stick his only weapon, in all the confidence of a man who has never felt the crack of a brass knuckle in the

hand of a garroter or made the acquaintance of a sandbag.

Dark figures were creeping from the alleys behind him. Mysterious whistles resounded and re-echoed from the courts. Something told him of his danger. He stopped and looked up at a name on the corner house, just legible in the dingy lamp light. To what part of Paris had he wandered? He was in the Rue Brodier. Involuntarily he turned to retrace his steps, only to find himself confronted by a half score of sturdy ruffians. He grasped his stick the tighter and backed closer to the wall. His face was very pale; but he did not show any sign of fear.

"You will go on," he answered, defiantly, "or I will call the police."

"The police! But few of those cattle make their beats in the Rue Brodier, even in the daytime," retorted the leader of the ruffians. "Come, your money, young master."

D'Auburon put his hand in his pocket and flung into the air what silver and gold he had about him. It fell upon the pavement under the street lamp. They rushed at it like beasts. Then D'Auburon lost his nerve. He thought he saw his opportunity. He sprang into the middle of the street and ran like a deer. The mob rushed after him. He would have distanced them all, perhaps, he was so very fleet, when the leader put his hand to his mouth and uttered a peculiar cry. Immediately from the alley ahead of him sprang two men. He was upon them before he knew it. He raised his heavy stick and struck one down. The other jumped at his throat and bore him to the ground.

Even while he was thus fighting and struggling for his life he became conscious that something was being done in his favor. He saw a medium sized, thick-set man standing over them and heard him speaking in tones of authority. Immediately the fellow with whom he was fighting relaxed his hand on his throat. On his dirty face alarm was plainly visible. With a muttered apology to the thickset man he rushed to meet the mob of his fellows, exclaiming:

"Back, you fools. It is Monsieur Cassagne."

Quietly they all sneaked away from the man whom of all others they dreaded. He had been known to go in among them, and at the point of the pistol pick out some desperate criminal and deliver him over to justice. That's how Alfred Cassagne and Charles D'Auburon became acquainted.

Profoundly grateful to M. Cassagne, D'Auburon not only did not lose sight of him, but visited him often. The friendship of the detective was the other's salvation. Merely curious at first, D'Auburon ultimately became completely fascinated in the character and career of his friend.

Thinking that he, D'Auburon, had seen and exhausted everything, he was astonished to find these new fields of adventure and occupation which this man had tilled to such perfection that they yielded an abundant harvest. Imagining he knew it all, he stood humbled in the presence of that genius, whose unequalled penetration of the thoughts and methods, and whose extraordinary knowledge of the ways of men and women, astonished while it enthralled him.

With an ardor which he could not have believed he possessed, he willingly placed himself and his fortune at the disposal of the great master in that most difficult of professions. D'Auburon, as Cassagne before him, succumbed to the fascinations of a pursuit which the ignorant despise, simply because they do not comprehend it. D'Auburon became first the pupil, and finally the assistant of the great detective. And D'Auburon and "Cluquot" were one and the same man.

It was nearly ten o'clock one morning when D'Auburon jumped out of bed. He had worked late the evening previous on a pet literary project—Lives of Great Detectives. On the table of his sitting room the manuscript upon which he had been engaged still lay. Scattered near it were half a dozen volumes, all relating to the same subject. D'Auburon stepped lightly from his bedroom into a small kitchen at the back of the flat. He struck a match, lit his gas stove and put on his chocolate. Going to his bathroom he turned on the cold water. Then he went out and stood for a moment in his dressing gown and slippers looking out through the lace curtains into the street. He was perceptibly bored. Active service was what he was longing for. Failing that, for things had been dull of late, he had fallen back upon his book.

He was aroused from his reverie by the sound of the water boiling over in the kitchen. Passing quickly through the other two apartments he busied himself in the preparation of his chocolate. This done, he took two rolls from a small cupboard, put them on a plate and carried them into his sitting room, where he deposited them on the table. Then while his chocolate was cooling, he went to the bathroom, where he threw aside his dressing gown and undergarment, kicked off his slippers and disported himself for a minute or two in the water. He was plunging around, enjoying the icy contact as only a thoroughly robust man does, when a loud knocking at the door of the sitting room was heard. He opened the bathroom door without stepping from the tub, and shouted lustily:

"Wait a minute; I am bathing."

"I can't wait. Hurry up," replied a voice on the outside of the door. "There's a letter for you, monsieur."

(To be continued.)

Too Much to Bother With.

Sabbath School Teacher—Where have you been lately, Sadie? I haven't seen you at Sunday school for some time.

Sadie Smith—Oh, please, miss, I'm learning French and music now, so mother don't wish me to take religious just yet.—London Sketch.



"He's engaged to a widow." "How did he meet her?" "He did not meet her. She overtook him."—Philadelphia Inquirer.

"When a bird can sing and won't—'Yes?' 'It isn't half the trouble as a bird that can't sing and will.'"—Baltimore American.

"One woman," remarked the mere man, "is just as good as another—if not better." "And one man," rejoined the fair widow, "is just as bad as another—if not worse."—Chicago News.

"Where have you been, Sam?" "I've been up to ma two ears in work, sah." "Up to your two ears in work?" "Yes, sah." "What doing, Sam?" "Eatin' a watahmellion, sah!"—Yonkers Statesman.

Tommy—Ma, baby is naughty. He cried because I wouldn't give him any of my cake. Mamma—Is his own cake finished? Tommy—Yes, ma; and he cried while I was eating that, too!—Punch.

"Don't I give you all the money you need?" her husband complained. "Yes," she replied, "but you told me before we were married that you would give me all I wanted."—Chicago Record-Herald.

"You seem to find that book very interesting," said Mrs. Henpeck. "Yes," replied Henry, "it's delightful. I've glanced at the ending, and the hero and heroine don't get married after all."—Washington Herald.

Miss Kreech—Some authorities believe that the practice of singing will keep a person from getting consumption. Mr. Knox—Yes, but most authorities believe in "the greatest good to the greatest number."—Philadelphia Press.

Rural Citizen (to son engaged in strange exercises)—Jabez, what in tar-nation be yer tryin' t' do? His Son—It's that thar correspondence school, dad. I got a letter from the sophomores yestiddy tellin' me to haze n'self.—Puck.

"Who is this fellow Rush you spoke of?" "Oh, he's a well-known chauffeur." "A well-known chauffeur?" "That's what I said!" "Why, I never heard of him." "Well, you would if you were a court clerk like I am!"—Yonkers Statesman.

"Gracious! my dear," said the first society belle, "I do hope you're not ill; you look so much older to-night." "I'm quite well, thank you, dear," replied the other, "and you—how wonderfully improved you are! You look positively young."—Philadelphia Press.

Casual Caller (to one next him)—I was introduced to that squint-eyed, red-haired woman over there as Mrs. Somebody or other. Don't you think the man was an idiot that married her? Next One (meekly)—I can't just say. I'm the man.—Baltimore American.

"You enjoy going to the theater?" "Yes," answered Mr. Meekton. "But you don't care much for musical plays?" "No. What I enjoy is to take Henrietta where there is a whole lot of conversation going on in which she can't say a word."—New York Tribune.

"Tomkins has got more nerve than any man I ever met." "What now?" "He came over to my place yesterday to borrow my gun, saying that he wanted to kill a dog that kept him awake nights." "Well, what of it?" "It was my dog he killed."—Milwaukee Sentinel.

"Does your honor wish to charge the jury?" asked the legal light, when all the evidence was in. "No, I guess not," replied the judge. "I never charge 'em anything. These fellows don't know much, any way, an' I let 'em have all they can make."—Harper's Weekly.

"Do you think," asked the sweet girl's mother, "that Mr. Wilkins is serious?" "Serious? Ma, he's worse than that. He stayed here till nearly 12 o'clock last night, and any one who had studied his face might have thought he was sitting up with a corpse."—Chicago Record-Herald.

Father—I wish you'd invite that young man of yours up here to-morrow night. Daughter (surprised at the request)—Why, father, I thought you said you had no use for him? Father—So I did, last summer. But to-morrow I'm going to put up the stove.—Detroit Free Press.

"What does your father do to earn his living?" asked a New York principal of a pupil who was being admitted. "Please, ma'am, he doesn't live with us; mamma supports me." "Well then, how does your mother earn her living?" "She gets paid for staying away from papa," replied the child, artlessly.—Harper's Weekly.

No person, man or woman, who can't look on the bright side should ever be permitted to enter the marriage state.

A STREET CAR STORY.

Box of Candy Was a Bag of Pepper and It Dropped.

He boarded a Troost avenue car at 5:30 o'clock last night with a paper package under his arm and sat down with an acquaintance, according to the Kansas City Times.

"Same old story, eh?" said the acquaintance, glancing at the package. "Four order clerks call at the door every morning and two telephones in the house, but your wife calls you up just as you're leaving the office and wants you to bring home—"

"Oh, no, not at all," broke in the bearer of the package, hastily. "I got over that years ago. They can't ring me in for a packhorse at my age. I'm too old a bird. This—er—this little package is a box of candy for my daughter. I—er—I wrap it up this way to fool her, that's all."

He tucked the package closer under his arm and became absorbed in his newspaper.

The vestibule was crowded when he started to leave the car at 20th street. As he squeezed his way through to the steps the "candy" was jostled from under his arm and fell to the floor.

"Ker-choo!" This from the conductor, as he grabbed his nose.

The crowd in the vestibule decided the conductor's act was admirable and worthy of emulation. "Ker-choo, ker-choo!" they said. Then everybody in the car took it up. "Ker-choo, ker-choo!" was the watchword.

Two young women who had been discussing lit-er-a-toor (in four syllables) cut it out and reached for their handkerchiefs. "Ker-choo!" they both said (in two syllables), with the "ch" sound retained.

"Ker-choo! Pepper!" gasped the conductor, as he kicked the bag into the street and gave the motorman two bells.

MOWING CAPITOL GROUNDS.

It has always been a problem how to keep the capitol lawns at an even height, and it was thought to be solved in the purchase of a steam mower; however, it took from a week to ten



AN ELECTRIC MOWER AT WORK.

days to cut the lawns. The new motor mower, which has a 20-h. p. gasoline engine, is quite rapid, being equal to the efforts of fifteen to twenty men with lawn mowers. Its wheels roll as well as cut the grass.

Queer Positions of Hearts.

There is one curious fact which not everybody notices about the common, finger-long, green caterpillars of our larger moths. Their hearts, instead of being in front, are at the back of the body and extend along the entire length of the animal. One can see the heart distinctly through the thin skin and can watch its slow beat, which starts at the tail and moves forward to the head. Hearts of this sort reaching from head to tail are not at all uncommon in the simpler creatures. The earthworm has one, and so have most worms, caterpillars and other crawling things. Hearts in the middle of the back also are quite as frequent as those in what seems to us to be the natural place. Many animals, the lobster for example, and the crayfish and the crab, which have short hearts like those of the beasts and birds, nevertheless have them placed just under the shell in what, in ourselves, would be the small of the back.—St. Nicholas.

Vitiated.

The Foreman (back for instructions)—Judge, we're all tangled up concernin' th' testimony of Jim Boggs.

The Court—Don't you know what to do with it?

The Foreman—We knowed jest what t' do with it, tell we diskivered wher he'd told th' truth in one place.—Puck.

His Cleverness.

"Don't be so lazy. There's plenty of room at the top and you're clever enough to get there."

"But," replied the lazy genius, "think how clever it is of me to find a place at the bottom, where there isn't so much room."

A lot of charity is wasted on the heathen abroad that might better be expended on those living next door.

Sadness is often jollity gone to seed.