

The Roupell Mystery

By Austyn Granville

CHAPTER XI.—(Continued.)

He sprang from the bath, the water dripping from his firm, white body and glistening in big drops on the thick hair on his heaving chest, as he rushed across the floor of his sitting room, holding his towel around him with one hand. He opened the door a little way and took in the letter. Still holding his towel about him, he stood examining the envelope very carefully. As he stood thus, with one foot slightly thrown forward, all his weight on his left leg, his muscles stood out like whip-cords. His eyes were bright and the light of a new interest suddenly sprang into them. He presented thus a splendid specimen of physical manhood. He had little occasion for the brisk rubbing to which he treated himself, when he had put down the letter unopened, merely remarking:

"I wonder what Cassagne is doing at Villeneuve."

The heat of his young and vigorous body had almost evaporated the moisture. He went back into his bedroom and put on a soft, silken suit of pajamas, caught at the waist with a brocaded belt. He took a tasseled Turkish fox from its peg and put it on his head. Then he went in to his chocolate and rolls, picked up his morning paper and began to read. He skimmed the sheet at first with a languid interest, eating very deliberately as his eye traveled over the paper. Suddenly he came to this item:

"Nothing new has transpired since yesterday in regard to the murder of Mme. Roupell at the Chateau Villeneuve."

He got no further. Like a flash he dropped the paper and reached out and took hold of the letter which he had almost forgotten, exclaiming:

"The Chateau Villeneuve! Villeneuve! Why, that's the place Cassagne writes from. Pshaw! what am I thinking of? He can't have been called in on that matter. It was in the hands of the prefect of police, and I know he hates Cassagne like poison."

Nevertheless it was with fingers which trembled a little in their eagerness that he opened the letter.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, "here's fun at last. Cassagne is engaged in that Villeneuve matter after all. Called in by a friend of the suspected party, too. Always on that side of the case—the most difficult, of course. Wants me to watch one Jules Chabot. I know him; old fop; club man. About as much chance of his being implicated as of my getting married. Well, I declare!"

There were two long sheets of instructions. His first excitement over, Charles D'Auburon read them twice very carefully, sipping his chocolate so slowly that the contents of the cup were almost cold before he finished it. Several minutes elapsed before he finally put Cassagne's letter on one side and lay back to think.

It was curious that his new field of activity should at last have brought him into contact professionally with a man whom he had hitherto known only socially. M. Jules Chabot, while a mere acquaintance, belonged to a club of which he was a member—the "Alliance." He was not very constant in his attendance; but he was tolerably well acquainted there. Jules Chabot he had known as one is apt to know those one casually meets in the billiard room or at the card table.

How fortunate it was that, acting under the advice of his friend Cassagne, he had scrupulously hidden from all his friends and acquaintances his new occupation. It would be a comparatively easy task for him to keep watch of Chabot's movements. The only question was how to do so without exciting his suspicions.

He sat revolving this matter in his mind for nearly an hour, at the end of which time he arose and completed his toilet, dressing himself with unusual care. The role he had now to play was one which had deceived many—that of a rich, innocent dandy, to whom appearance is everything, and who has not a thought in his head beyond the set of his hat or his tie.

He selected from his wardrobe a fine morning frock coat and a flowered waistcoat of an oriental design which was all the rage among the boulevards. He put on a very tall collar and a necktie of a very ultra fashion; a glossy hat, patent leather boots and a silver-headed Malacca cane completed his outfit. As he descended the stairs he put an eye glass in one eye.

Thus accoutred, Charles D'Auburon was as different a being as you could well imagine, from the free and easy Bohemian of an hour previously. A slight drawl was apparent in his speech. Halling a cab, he directed the driver to proceed to the Alliance club. He was the most innocent looking young man in the whole of Paris. A vacant smile played around his mouth. One gloved hand brought his blonde mustache in a caressing manner, while with the other he returned the salutations of his numerous acquaintances. M. Jules Chabot, seated in the bay window of the Alliance club, saw him alight, and surveyed him with a look in which contempt struggled with politeness and got rather the best of it.

"There is that insufferable fop, D'Auburon, coming up the steps," he remarked to an intimate. "I think that fellow looks a bigger fool every day."

CHAPTER XII.

When Alfred Cassagne bid Dr. Mason adieu, it was to return to Paris, first to think and then to act. Never in the course of his experience had a encountered a case which presented obstacles of

so puzzling a nature. He was a true Parisian. A day or two in the country soon satisfied him. He required the stimulus of a great city to impart to his mental organization that activity and sharpness which the calm and quiet of a rustic existence lulled into temporary repose. His most logical deductions had been made in the rush and roar of the streets. Before leaving the chateau a conversation something like the following had taken place between Dr. Mason and himself:

"This brother of Madame Roupell's, this Henry Graham—can you tell me when and where he was last heard from?"

"The last letter Madame received from him," replied the physician, "bore the postmark of Blois. That must be twenty years ago, as near as I can recollect."

The first thing Cassagne did on his arrival in Paris was to call on his friend and pupil, Charles D'Auburon. He found him at home, his face glowing with suppressed enthusiasm.

"Now," said Cassagne, "tell us what has happened? Have you found Jules Chabot, and what progress have you made toward getting acquainted?"

"I already knew him slightly," answered D'Auburon. "I approached him cautiously, because if he is really implicated in this matter he would naturally be suspicious of any sudden show of friendship. Fortune favored me, however. I managed to lose a game of billiards to him at the Alliance this morning, the stakes a luncheon at the Cafe Anglais, whither we repaired shortly after."

"What do you think that blundering idiot Lablanche is doing? He has set someone to shadowing Monsieur Chabot. The fellow followed us in a cab. I thought we had given him the slip, but, looking out of the windows of the Cafe Anglais there he was lounging against a lamp post, and looking like a detective all over. Did you ever hear of such clumsiness in all your life?"

"You must exercise your ingenuity, my dear boy. A little thing like that shouldn't disturb you. Always recollect that in this business it is the man who keeps cool that wins. It is a golden maxim."

D'Auburon was rapidly cooling. He had been waiting all the evening for the arrival of his friend to indulge in his tirade against the prefect. He had delivered himself. Then he became again, as Cassagne put it, "a reasoning being."

Cassagne then gave D'Auburon a short sketch of what had occurred at the Chateau Villeneuve. He finish his account by producing the little gold locket.

"The man who wore this was last heard from at Blois. The owner of this locket was the man who actually murdered Madame Roupell. Whether he had accomplices or not it is hard at present to say. The prefect argues, doubtless, from Jules Chabot's presence in the chateau on the night of the murder, that he is in some way connected with it. My own opinion is that it is a mere coincidence; nothing more. Still it will not do to leave any point uncovered. That's why I want you to keep him well in sight. Do you see?"

"I see, of course," responded D'Auburon. "I can keep him in sight readily. Meantime, what do you yourself propose to do? Go to Blois, I suppose?"

"Exactly, and I start to-morrow morning. That means I shall go to bed early to-night. You must try and discover this man Chabot's most intimate friends, meanwhile. I may be gone for a day or so. Try and go where he goes, to be invited where he is invited; and above all don't let Lablanche get ahead of us. He's not such a fool as you think. If he makes blunders, remember he makes remarkably clever ones."

"There was some talk of a ball to-morrow night," remarked D'Auburon at length, when he had well weighed the other's words—"a ball at the Vicomte de Valiars'—"

"Ah! do you know him?"

"Yes, as I know them all. I know of him. He can be got at if necessary. From what Chabot dropped," continued D'Auburon, "I believe he intends to be there. He is quite in with the de Valiars, I understand. You have heard of de Valiars, I suppose? Great financial nabob, and all that sort of thing."

Cassagne nodded, quietly. "You ought certainly to be there. One never knows what may happen."

"Now to find, in a population of nearly thirty thousand people, this one individual, this Henry Graham, who was last heard from in this very city seven years ago," soliloquized M. Cassagne, as he stepped from his compartment on to the platform of the little railway station and saw frowning from above him the ancient castle of Blois. All the way down in the train he had been busily occupied in planning how he would find the human needle, Henry Graham, in the bundle of hay, Blois.

With nothing to guide him but his own marvelous powers of reasoning, he now started forth upon a search which ninety-nine men out of a hundred would have considered worse than useless. For it was quite within the bounds of possibility that the man he was looking for had lived in Blois under another name than that of Henry Graham.

M. Cassagne sauntered quietly down the curving, narrow main street of the old town. By nightfall he had accomplished this: He had had his hair dressed nearly twenty times, he had ordered and paid for but barely tasted nearly forty meals. He had discovered that there were exactly two inns for every barber in the town of Blois. But no barber, and no innkeeper had been able

to inform him of such a person as Henry Graham. M. Cassagne retired to rest in the snugest hostelry in the town, the Golden Fleece.

Such progress did the detective make the next morning in the good graces of M. Cratteau, the proprietor of the inn, that by the time the ancient gilt clock over the stables had chimed out the half hour, M. Cratteau and he were on excellent terms, walking around the little garden and chatting and talking confidentially.

M. Cassagne was confiding a wonderful fairy story. He was at Blois in the interests of a little girl of whose person and estate he had been appointed guardian. He had only to establish the death of one individual to prove his little ward heir to a large property in America. M. Cratteau, in his ten years' residence in Blois, had doubtless met many Americans.

"Yes, many."

"Had monsieur known an American called Henry Graham?"

"Graham! Graham?" No, the man had not. "But I think I can direct you to a person who can," he added. "Go and see Madame Beausantin, the old washerwoman of the Rue du Concert. She has done the washing of every American who has been in Blois for the past twenty years. She gets all the business because she knows what they want. She may be able to tell you something about him."

It was barely nine o'clock when M. Cassagne, having finished his coffee and rolls, issued forth from the courtyard of the Golden Fleece, and proceeded in the direction of the Rue du Concert. It was a short street, containing neither inns nor barber shops, which, perhaps, accounted for his not having previously set foot within its precincts. If it had not been for the fortuitous meeting with Cratteau, in all probability M. Cassagne would never have thought of looking there for traces of Henry Graham.

It was a bright, smart shop, with large plate glass windows, in which were displayed, beautifully ironed, two long lace curtains, lying specimens of the quality of the work which was never, even for the best customers, done within. The interior of the establishment was fitted up with a large stove in the rear, on which dozens of irons were heating. Ranged in long rows across the floor were the ironing benches at which the women labored. Through an open door at the back, a glimpse of huge piles of linen, in various stages of renovation, was to be had. The whole place was full of steam. Though the weather was warm, there was an entire absence of proper ventilation. The atmosphere of the place to one unaccustomed to breathe it was intolerable.

The appearance of the young woman in the establishment of Mme. Beausantin, however, entirely belied that of the popular picture. Notwithstanding the arduous character of their employment, they were as robust and strong as amazons. The glow of health was on their cheeks, and the muscles of their bare arms and necks stood out like whip cords. They were not at work, however, when M. Cassagne arrived. It was a time-honored custom of the establishment that from nine o'clock to half-past was to be devoted to rest and refreshment.

When M. Cassagne intimated his wish for a strictly private interview with Mme. Beausantin she bowed consent and led the way to an inner apartment.

M. Cassagne took a seat. Mme. Beausantin stood with one elbow on the mantelpiece, and eyed him curiously. She had been mistaken in the gentleman being a customer, she told herself. What then was the object of the present visit? She was soon to know. The detective approached point blank the one subject which was always uppermost in his mind.

"Can you tell me anything of the whereabouts of one Henry Graham? You were his landress some seven years ago?"

In a moment he had hit upon a plan of enlisting the co-operation of Mme. Beausantin. An excellent judge of character, he could tell that greed of gain was one of her predominant traits. Then, without giving the landress time to deny or affirm his statement, he added in an impressive tone:

"My name is Alfred Cassagne, and I am a detective from Paris."

Mme. Beausantin's little beady eyes no longer twinkled. Instead, they appeared to be dilated to twice their former size. Her hands trembled apprehensively and her fingers interlaced themselves together in a spasm of sudden nervousness.

"A detective!" she gasped, when she was at length able to command her voice.

"Do not be alarmed, madame," said Cassagne. "Not the slightest harm is intended to you. On the contrary, perhaps I may be able to make your special knowledge of this affair of considerable pecuniary advantage to you. Take a seat. There is a good deal to talk about."

The calm tone of the detective somewhat reassured the proprietress of the laundry. She sat down. The look of alarm on her face gave way to her predominant expression—the expression of greed.

"What do you want to know?" was her eager question, in a voice which asked almost as distinctly as words. What will you pay for it?"

"I want to know as much of Monsieur Graham's history as you are acquainted with."

He drew from his pocketbook two bills of the Bank of France. They were of the denomination of one hundred francs apiece. Taking one between his finger and thumb, he pushed it toward Mme. Beausantin across the table.

"When you tell me all you know about Monsieur Graham, you shall have the other one," he remarked, impressively.

"The sum is entirely too small, monsieur," she said, "for information which is really worth having."

(To be continued.)

In Milan there are 38,000 families living in one room each.

STUDY FORESTRY.

Students at Oregon Agricultural College Gathering Tree Seeds.

By E. A. Lake, Oregon Agricultural College.

The students in forestry at the Agricultural college are making their first collection of seeds of native trees and shrubs for use in the establishment of a forest tree nursery and arboretum. The purpose in view is not only that the work shall be instructive to the student in the study of seeds and seedage, silviculture and dendrology, but that the plant shall be a source of data to the whole state upon the growth, habit, resistance and general character of the trees and shrubs of Oregon, so far as is possible to grow them upon the same site and similar conditions.

Not only are local seeds being collected but seeds from the home districts are coming in from friends of students and the institution. This kindness on the part of those residing in the more distant and mountainous parts of the state is highly appreciated, as it enables the class to obtain a much greater variety than otherwise would be possible with the time and means at the command of either students or institution.

Owing to the fact that the course is but one year old, only the general and preliminary phases of the subject have been considered by the students in the work. The O. A. C. Forest club, an organization of those interested in the forests of the state, is now discussing forest fire laws, their enforcement, efficiency and improvement. Each student is assigned a phase of the topic in hand and in due time reports his findings to the club. Prominent timber, mill and lumbermen upon invitation discuss various topics before the club, as transportation, timber preservation, forest conservation, re-forestation, improved methods of lumbering, U. S. forest service work and similar topics.

Later the advanced students will take up work looking to the solution of some of the very practical problems now before the wood users of the country.

The great problem of what to do with the waste, including the standing timber that is injured by insect and fungus foes, will be one of the first to be investigated as soon as the equipment of the department will permit.

The statement is made upon good authority that fifteen per cent of the mature timber on the western slope of the central region of the Cascade is wholly lost through fungous diseases, and that another fifteen per cent is graded as cull. Beetles, borers and minor foes do considerable further damage, and it is safe to say that the sum total of these losses must amount to millions of dollars. It is reasonable to suppose, in the face of recent results in agricultural practices in our own country, to say nothing of the modern forestry practices of Europe, that the major part of this loss could be turned to gain through the intelligent investigation of the troubles and the application of modern measures for combatting these foes of the forest.

Other great problems are those relating to taxation, re-forestation, utilizing mill waste, improved methods of harvesting the crops, disposing of the debris and weed trees, timber technology and the preservation of lumber.

These problems together with many more it is the purpose of the college to help solve through the department of forestry, as well as train men to take hold of the practical work and problems of our forests and thus insure the best possible use of the tree crop.

Publications for Farmers.

The following publications of interest to farmers and others have been issued by the Agricultural department of the Federal government and will be furnished free, so long as they are available, except where otherwise noted, upon application to the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C.:

Farmers' Bulletin No. 116.—Irrigation in Fruit Growing. By E. J. Wickson, M. A., professor of agricultural practice, University of California, and horticulturist of the California experiment station. Pp. 48, figs. 8. A statement of the relations of irrigation to fruit production, and of irrigation methods as they have been demonstrated by Pacific coast experience.

Farmers' Bulletin No. 138.—Irrigation in Field and Garden. By E. J. Wickson, M. A. Pp. 40, figs. 18. This bulletin discusses the subject from the standpoint of the individual farmer, and contains instructions on the determination of ditch levels, the measurement of small streams, sources of water supply and their use, the distribution of irrigation water, methods of applying water, the choice of an irrigation method, and the time for the application of water.

Bulletin No. 147.—Report on Drainage Investigations in 1903. By C. G. Elliott, drainage expert, irrigation investigations, office of experiment stations. Pp. 62, pls. 5, figs. 12. Price 10 cents. This is a report of the work done by Mr. Elliott during the year 1903. It includes discussions of plans for drainage near Fresno, Cal., in the Yakima and Ahtanum valleys, Washington, in the Grey Bull valley, Wyoming, in the Missouri valley and in Hancock county, Iowa, and of drainage as a preventive of hillside erosion in Georgia.

BEAUTIFYING A CITY.

American Towns as a Rule Pay Little Attention to Shade Trees.

In the beautifying of a city special attention should be paid to shade trees in the residence portions and in the parks. The St. Louis Globe-Democrat says:

"In the most beautiful cities of the world the shade trees are scarcely second to architecture in pleasing effects. The architects and city foresters supplement each other, and the most delightful scenes are those in which the efforts of both blend harmoniously. American towns, as a rule, spring up without attention to shade trees, but the time comes when the lack is pressed upon public attention by comparison with other cities that have been less negligent. Superficially viewed, shade trees are a minor item. But, in fact, they are one of the most important branches of municipal work. They add to the value of property to an extent but little understood, though every purchaser of a home knows how much he is attracted by a well-shaded street. A few well-developed shade trees on a vacant lot, with other good specimens along the curbs, are sure to bring along customers willing to pay a little higher price than on a naked highway. The general vistas of a well-planted neighborhood are worth still more. All large cities are multiplying parks and boulevards in which trees, shrubbery and lawns are a main consideration. Compare the price of property in such localities with that in other sections, outside of business, and a true idea is formed of values and their basis. Shade trees are property of a precious kind.

"The city shade tree should be a special object of care on the part of the municipal authorities. It should be guarded and protected. No person should be allowed to hitch a horse to it. No candidate or other advertiser should be permitted to tack a placard on it, or allow it to be abused in any way. Not only should the planting of trees in a city be encouraged and the trees outside of the city along roads should be conserved and protected for the public benefit. It is shocking to see fine forest trees along the Glendale trolley line and along the turnpikes defaced with all sorts of tin and paper signs that are tacked upon them. The trees should be respected for the public's sake."

"SAUCE FOR THE GANDER."

Hats-Off-in-the-Theater Rule Gives Woman Her Inaug.

Score one for the women. Under the present management of the Astor Theater in New York every woman who holds a seat coupon is under contract to remove her hat if she is requested to do so. The agreement is one of the terms on which the ticket is sold. The man who conceived this idea is doubtless congratulating himself upon the fact that he has solved the problem presented when a woman occasionally declines to lower her top hamper. But in achieving his victory he has come into collision with two other problems.

A woman inquires with bland suavity whether the management, having forced the removal of the hats, has provided any place to put them. There are the veil and the hatpins as well as the hats. So long as their removal was a voluntary act of courtesy the women were content to carry them on their laps or fasten them on the backs of the seats before them. But under compulsion—that is a different matter.

The woman also asks with sweetness but deep feeling whether the management has imposed a contract on the male holders of seat coupons preventing them from forcing women to arise between every two acts and crowding by them that they may assuage their alcoholic thirst. She suggests that the bibulous ones be compelled to purchase end seats at a slightly increased price or refrain from imposing discomfort upon those about them.

Plainly, what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander.—Cleveland Leader.

Predicament of Age.

To-day our attitude toward old age has greatly changed. We no longer pretend to treat it as a hackneyed joke, but instead have agreed politely to ignore it. No one is old, simply because he cannot afford to be.

The kingdom has been given over to the young, and age must borrow youth's clothing if it would still hold its own in the council chamber or the market place.—Gentleman's Magazine.

To Meet the Demand.

"Do these navel oranges really grow without seeds, mamma?" asked Tommy.

"Yes," replied his mother, "some smart man discovered a way to make them grow that way."

"O, wouldn't it be fine if he could only find a way to make chickens grow with four drumsticks."—Philadelphia Press.

"What is home without a mother?" Ask the newly-married couple and they will tell you it is simply delightful.