

The Roupell Mystery

By Austyn Granville

CHAPTER XIX.—(Continued.)

"But it is quite likely that she would give us any clue to the whereabouts of one who was almost a son to her. Besides, I thought you said you couldn't find Madame La Seur."

"I had some difficulty at first; but I have had one of my men on the track for the past two days. He now reports her as residing in Belleville. I shall move up into that neighborhood to-night, and commence my investigations. In the meantime I want you to continue to watch Monsieur Chabot and report what steps our deluded friend the prefect of police is taking."

So they parted, Cassagne to his lodgings to assume such a dress as would harmonize with the humble quarters of the town where he proposed to pursue his investigations, D'Auburon to his club, where he had an appointment with M. Jules Chabot, and in whose company he would presently repair to the drawing rooms of the Vicomte and Vicomtesse de Valair.

At about half past eight the next evening, anyone who had taken the trouble to look might have seen enter the Rue Banquiere by its western end, a man dressed in rough garments, who looked like a well-to-do workman, with his heavy shoes and lime-bespattered corduroys. He wore no collar on his check cotton shirt, but around his throat was loosely tied a red pocket handkerchief. A bag containing a few tools was slung over his shoulder.

Presently he stopped, ostensibly to purchase some fruit, which a hawker in one of the barrows in the middle of the street was vociferously offering for sale. As he stood there chatting in a friendly way with the peddler, however, his gaze in reality fixed upon a scene before him unique even among the curious phases of life to be encountered in the Rue Banquiere.

In a shop which in point of size was double at least that of either of its adjoining neighbors, a crowd of the very poorest of Belleville had gathered. There must have been thirty or forty men, women and children inside the doors, at the very least, and as many more waiting outside on the pavement.

Over this shop swung a sign-board, on both sides of which was painted the figure of a man-cook, in a white cap and apron, industriously carving an unnaturally red round beef; and underneath, apparently unharmed by the steam and the gravy, for it was plainly to be read, was the democratic legend, "I carve for the people."

Inside the shop a gentleman stolidly habited, but a trifle less corpulent and dignified than his counterfeit presentment on the sign, was at that moment actually engaged in the very occupation which the legend advertised. He was engaged in carving for the people.

In place, however, of operating upon a round of beef, he was engaged in slicing, with great rapidity, a meat pudding. This pudding itself, apart from the hungry crowd waiting to devour it, was an object worth looking at. It was at least five feet long and as thick as a ship's cable. As the cook cut off a slice, a stout woman of about fifty-five years of age would seize it, wrap it up in a piece of newspaper, and hand it to someone in the crowd, not letting go of the appetizing morsel, however, until she had received in exchange therefor two coins in copper, a great heap of which lay in a drawer beside her.

The workman at the huckster's barrow finished his apple and bought another. The intent gaze which he kept fixed upon the cook shop at length attracted the attention of the vender.

"You seem to be amused," he said. "Have you never seen a pudding cut before?"

"Not such a pudding as that," replied the man with the bag. "It's quite a sight, ain't it? Why, there's another."

"That's nothing. They'll keep that thing up for an hour yet. Old Mother Merchant's puddings have a reputation, I tell you, in the Rue Banquiere."

"The shop, then, belongs to Madame Merchant, who, I suppose, is that old lady?"

"Yes, and not only the shop, but the house as well. She has not been cutting puddings all these years for nothing. She's a pretty good-hearted woman, though, and nobody begrudges her her money. In the winter time she lets me sell hot pies right in front of her shop here, though it's against her own trade."

The glare of the petroleum lamps flickered up less brightly. The night crept on apace. The fierce glare of the street changed to a dingy twilight. It was as if the footlights had been turned half-way down in some realistic melodrama. The crowd melted away at last.

Only the stub end of one of the puddings remained on the greasy counter. The drawer was piled full of coins. A wretched woman, gaunt with famine, was the only customer left. She was bargaining for a bone with which to make soup. Her two starving children, clinging to her tattered gown, eyed with wistful looks the remnant of the pudding; but it was a luxury beyond their mother's means.

The workman took up his bag, and nodding good-night to the huckster, crossed over into the shop. The man in the cap and apron was resting from his labors. The workman called to him and he came up to the counter.

"A slice of pudding," said the workman.

The man in the cap and apron cut it. "There's no more paper," he said.

"You'll have to take it in your hands."

It's nearly cold now, anyway. Why didn't you come in when it was hot? It was grand then, I tell you."

The wretched mites clinging to the tattered skirts of their mother, moved reluctantly toward the door. The woman had secured her bone. Soup in the immediate future was of course excellent; but here was meat pudding being eaten under their very eyes. They would have liked to stay a while. Perhaps the workman would have dropped some.

"You are right," said the man with the bag. "These puddings are better hot. Here, little girl. I've—I've lost my appetite."

"Give it to me," cried the gaunt woman. "I will divide it fairly."

"No, let the children have that," replied the man with the bag. "Cut another slice for Madame."

The woman burst into tears. Even the man with the cap and apron was affected; but it was at the generosity of the man with the bag.

It was getting late. The Rue Banquiere was becoming deserted. The hucksters outside had covered up their wares and were beginning to take their departure.

The man with the bag, however, still loitered in the cook shop. He had made a few purchases, and had chatted pleasantly with the man in the cap and apron on the latest local sensation, a riddling which had resulted in the death of two officers.

"Not but what it serves them right," remarked the man with the bag. "Why don't these swells of the police let Belleville folks alone?"

"And they must have known the kind of place into which they were going," added Madame, speaking for the first time.

The man with the bag applauded her sentiments. Of course they did. Madame was a woman of good sense. If Madame had her way, perhaps, she would have the police let the people of Belleville alone altogether, and never come near them. Madame was emphatic that she would, "for some of the worst of them were her best customers," she remarked, laughing.

"I am in the door and window business," replied the man with the bag, significantly.

"I thought you were not in a straight line when I first saw you," said the cook. "Your hands ain't rough enough, and you look altogether too fat. Workmen don't live as you've lived."

"Oh! they feed us well enough where I've just come from," replied the workman; and he kept his eyes steadily fixed on Madame's face. "I've just spent five years in the prisons of Toulon—why, what's the matter, Madame? You never had anyone there, did you—no friend of yours?"

But Madame was deadly white, and clutching spasmodically at the greasy counter.

"It is nothing," she gasped at length. "It is the heat—it is—I am not well. Monsieur will call again. I hope he will be a good customer. We have many like him."

"And I'm all right, you know," said the man with the bag. "The police can't touch me, for I've served my time."

He slung his bag over his shoulder, picked up his parcels, and wishing the pair good night, passed out on to the nearly deserted street, with the hang-dog look of a man who had been hunted often, and dreaded to be hunted again. He trudged on to the top of the Rue Banquiere, and gained a broader thoroughfare. Immediately around the corner there was a cab in waiting. The man with the bag entered it, and raising the trap door in the roof, said to the sleepy driver:

"Home!" And as he rattled along on the pavement, he said to himself: "Mendotti was right. The woman is undoubtedly Madame La Seur. Of course she would change her name when she married again. How she blanched when I spoke of Toulon. And another thing I'm sure of; she never bought that house and lot she owns by cutting up puddings in Belleville. She must be watched and followed night and day."

CHAPTER XX.

"The woman you want went in there!" It was Mendotti, one of Cassagne's men, who spoke to his employer, as both stood in the deep shadow of a tree, whose furthest branches spread over the narrow street and beyond a high brick wall opposite.

"She went in there, not twenty minutes ago," repeated Mendotti, pointing with his finger to a wooden door, which was let into the wall. "I at once sent you a message. I have not moved from here except to do that. She's in there yet. I don't know whose house it is."

"But I do. It is the residence of Colbert-Remplin, the rich banker of the Place de l'Opera. That door leads into his garden. Tell me how she got in. Did she have a key?"

"No, a woman admitted her."

"What kind of a woman was she?"

"An elderly woman. She looked as though she might be a housekeeper, or an upper servant. I crept up near enough to hear her say, 'My mistress is busy now, but she will see you in a few minutes. Go into the summer house.'"

Cassagne thought deeply for a minute or two. At last he said:

"Run around in front of the house and see what is going on. The house is well lit up. The Colbert-Remplins are not people who entertain much; but there must be something on to-night. Do I not hear the sound of music? Whoever

is to meet the woman," continued the detective, "is to meet her in the summer house. Oh, to be able to scale that wall, and get into those grounds!"

Looking around him his quick eye fell upon the tree immediately over their heads, along the branches of which he thought he might possibly work his way and so drop into the garden.

The night was tolerably dark. But few people were passing in that fashionable quarter. After a moment's hesitation he determined to attempt it. After first instructing Mendotti to await his return, he then climbed upon his assistant's shoulders, and was just able to reach the lower limb of the cedar.

"I am all right," he whispered, and he commenced to work his way very cautiously along one of the branches. It bent tremendously with his weight; but he put up his hand and drew down an upper bough. Thus distributing the burden, he managed to pass the wall, and continued to creep along the branches until, they gradually bending with their load, he was enabled to drop noiselessly into the garden.

"I will go and wait for my lady in the center of the lawn, and I had better be quick about it," he said.

Relying upon his general knowledge of the construction of a Parisian garden, M. Cassagne walked rapidly forward, struck his foot against some unforeseen obstacle, tripped, stumbled, and the next moment found himself struggling in the water. He had overlooked the fact that some gardens have fountains.

"Where have you come from, and what have you been doing?" was the astonished inquiry of Charles D'Auburon.

He had been aroused from his bed at midnight by a thunderous knocking at his door, and on going to see what all the noise was about, had discovered Cassagne, standing, the picture of misery, under the lamp on the landing.

Dripping yet with the moisture which ran from all his garments; minus his hat, and shivering like an aspen, the famous detective presented a picture well calculated to excite the utmost commiseration; but a gleam of triumph was in his undimmed eye; and he wore the air of a conqueror rather than of a man who had met with a humiliating accident.

Cassagne entered into a circumstantial relation of his adventures. When he arrived at what he facetiously termed the "frog-pond incident," D'Auburon could not restrain his mirth, and it was so contagious that Cassagne, though the joke was against himself, could not refrain from joining him. The two men roared until the room shook again. When their merriment had somewhat subsided M. Cassagne took up the thread of his narrative in this wise:

"I had hardly got my head out of water, and cleared my ears and eyes, before I heard a door open and shut, in the back part of the house. I crept softly out of the fountain and lay extended at full length upon the grass. Straining my eyes in the direction of the house, I perceived the figure of a woman coming toward me. She was a woman daintily dressed in full ball costume. I had no difficulty in following her. She had slipped unperceived from the ball room, and no doubt believed herself to be entirely free from surveillance. I crept along on my hands and knees and got close to her as she came around the bend in the gravel walk. As she neared me, the moon, which had hitherto been concealed by passing clouds, shone out a little and gleamed upon her soft silk dress and her white shoulders. In that brief moment I saw and recognized her."

"Who was she?" exclaimed D'Auburon, in a tone of almost breathless interest.

"She was the woman I expected. She was Madame Colbert-Remplin, the banker's wife."

"You are joking," exclaimed D'Auburon. "Both Mendotti and yourself must have been mistaken. The light was uncertain, you say. It was some young lady of the household going to meet her lover."

"It was nothing of the kind. It was Madame Colbert-Remplin, going to meet Madame Mechant, nee La Seur, who has learned some secret of hers and is trading upon it to her own advantage."

"Impossible!"

"It is a fact. I can understand now how Madame Mechant is able to become a property owner by selling meat puddings in the Rue Banquiere. She is a blackmailer. I myself heard money pass between them. The chink of gold pieces. It is a sound which I cannot be deceived in."

D'Auburon knew the almost marvelous gift which his friend had received from nature in the matter of hearing. No stag in the forest could catch a slighter sound than his highly trained and exquisite organ.

"You are probably correct," he said. "Were you able to glean any particulars of their secret?"

"I was not. The interview was very brief, and what little conversation there was was carried on in a very low tone. In fact, only once or twice did I catch a broken sentence. Once they spoke louder than usual. Madame Mechant was threatening the banker's wife; and Madame Colbert-Remplin was begging the other not to expose her."

"She has her thoroughly in her power?" asked D'Auburon.

"Undoubtedly, and that her secret is in some way connected with Philip Graham, I feel convinced."

"Why?"

"There was one other sentence I heard, 'if you have no mercy for me, do not ruin my child. At least respect the feelings of his unhappy mother.'"

(To be continued.)

Not the Same.

Merchant—I thought you told me he was a man of very good character.

Quibble—I guess you misunderstood me. I said he was a man of good reputation.—Philadelphia Press.

POULTRY RAISING IN OREGON.

Extracts From Oregon Experiment Station Bulletin.

The climate of Oregon from a poultryman's standpoint is discussed by James Dryden in Bulletin No. 96 of the Oregon Experiment station which has recently been published. Among other things the writer says:

It is of course worth considering by the man looking for a location whether Western Oregon with its open winters and freedom from snow and zero temperatures does not offer opportunities for the production of eggs and poultry that are not found in Eastern and Middle West states. That poultry thrive in cold sections where snow and zero weather prevail is not to be denied, but the labor and expense of caring for them is undoubtedly greater there. To secure an egg yield in winter where the climate is severe entails more expense for housing and more care in the feeding. It is probably true that the smallest profits are made during the winter months though the prices are very much higher than in spring and summer, because the egg yield is so small from the average flock as to leave little or no margin of profit. It is also true that the egg yield is quickly affected by changes in the weather, especially in the temperature. A sudden change from mild to cold weather means a certain check in the egg production, and although the weather soon moderates it will often take several weeks before the egg yield gets back to where it was. The only way to prevent this is to provide housing that will protect the fowls from too sudden changes in temperature. This entails more expense in housing and consequently diminished profits, but what is of more importance is the highly artificial conditions that it necessitates.

It would appear therefore that there are certain advantages that this state possesses over sections of the country where zero weather and snow prevail. First, a milder climate and less severe changes in temperature than is characteristic of Eastern states. Second, in sections of the state with no snowfall the poultry can range over the fields and find animal food and green food which are often hard to get where the snow covers the ground.

The heavy rainfall of Western Oregon, and small percentage of sunshine may be set down as a disadvantage, but when the nature of the rainfall is understood it is doubtful whether it is very much of a detriment. Owing to the moderating influence of the Pacific ocean these rains are warm and have not the chilling effect of the rains in Eastern states. The temperature of Western Oregon in the winter months is usually higher when it rains than when the sky is cloudless, and the fowls will usually be found out in the rain except when it is very heavy, which is not often the case. One poultryman in Marion county said to the writer in November, before the rainy season set in, that he wished it would rain, because, he said, his hens laid better when it rained. The explanation of this, if it is true, may not be in the rain itself, but in the fact that it brings to the surface many angleworms, which supply the lack of animal food in the ration.

Turkeys are successfully raised in Oregon, and turkeys are known to be easily affected by rain, but the fact that the rains are warm no doubt largely accounts for the success in turkey raising in this state. Douglas county in Oregon produces several times more turkeys than the state of Rhode Island, noted for turkeys. Another thing in favor of the mild climate and freedom from snow is that the fowls are able to secure practically the year round all the green food necessary in the fields. And finally, the fowls in their search for food in the fields get the exercise which is necessary for it is worthy of mention in this connection that the largest special poultry district in the United States is found in Northern California, that has no snowfall. That district is somewhat similar to that of Western Oregon, with its open winters, mild and humid climate and nearness to the ocean.

My investigations of the poultry industry of Oregon have been confined to the western part of the state, the region west of the Cascade mountains. This section at the present time produces more poultry products than the larger area of the state east of the Cascades. As the agriculture of Central and Eastern Oregon becomes developed we may expect greater development of poultry-keeping, and probably in time that great agricultural area may produce more poultry products than the older section of the state in Western Oregon. The climatic conditions are different east of the mountains, the heavy rainfall is absent and snow covers the ground during part of the winter. The climate there is more characteristic of the Rocky mountain region, though no such severe weather prevails as in the Middle and Northwestern states. If it should prove that a dry climate with plenty of sunshine but lacking the severe winter changes of temperature of the East is the ideal one for poultry, we may expect a great growth of the poultry industry east of the Cascades in Oregon. Undoubtedly on the grain ranches of Central and Eastern Oregon where food is cheap there is opportunity for great profit in poultry raising.



"If it wasn't for one thing Tompkins would be the most successful liar. 'She hasn't any friends to speak of.' 'No? Then what are they for?'—Puck.

"I ever met." "And that?" "No one ever believes his lies."—Milwaukee Sentinel.

"Nagg is very fond of entertaining, isn't he?" "Yes; his wife has to be pleasant when there's company present."—Boston Traveler.

"I will pay your debts to-day, but it is positively for the last time!" "Oh, dear uncle, then wait at least until tomorrow!"—Friedgeule Blaetter.

"Out of a job?" "Yes—and they put a woman in my place." "Gee! Well, I'll tell you—why don't you marry the woman?"—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

She—I heard about the elopement. Has her mother forgiven them? He—I think not. I understand she has gone to live with them.—Illustrated Bits.

"Did you ever bite a Boston girl?" "No, I am afraid to go near them," replied the second mosquito. "I've heard they are very cold-blooded."—Houston Post.

"My bride wanted to go on a week's wedding tour, and I wanted to stay at home. Well, we compromised by going on a tour around the world!"—Meggen-dorfer Blaetter.

Clara—As Ethel married in haste, I supposed she repented at leisure? Maude—No; she repented at a cheap boarding house, I understand.—Chicago Daily News.

"I have come all the way out here," said the tenderfoot, "to see your beautiful sunset." "Somebody's been stringin' you, stranger," replied Arizona Al. "It ain't mine."—Chicago Record-Herald.

Weary Walker—De world's all wrong. Tired Tatters—Wot's eatin' youse now? Weary Walker—Ef I'd had de makin' uv it I'd made all de roads runnin' down hill.—Chicago News.

Mrs. Tourist—I'm afraid that the monkey wouldn't please my husband. Vendor—But Madame will find it easier to find another husband than to get a monkey like that for three piastres!—Le Rire.

"What shall I read you first?" "The marriages." "Here is an article about some boys who were found playing with dynamite." "Well, read it. It possesses the same elements of interest."—Houston Post.

"What," queried the young man, "is the difference between white lies and black lies?" "White lies," answered the home-grown philosopher, "are the kind we tell; black lies are the kind we hear."—Chicago News.

"Yes," said the Summer Girl, "it's all off. I sent everything back to him yesterday." "Not the ring?" asked her friend. "No, he said I could keep that if I'd send him the hammock I caught him in."—Yonkers Statesman.

Mistress—Did you remember to feed the cat every day during my absence? Servant—Every day but one, ma'am. Mistress—And didn't the poor thing have anything to eat all day? Servant—Oh, yes, ma'am. She ate the canary.—Chicago Daily News.

First Stranger—Excuse me, but you are a physician, I believe? Second Stranger—You are mistaken, sir. First Stranger—But I overheard you say you followed the medical profession. Second Stranger—And so I do. I'm an undertaker.—Chicago Daily News.

"An artist," said the man with pointed whiskers, "must not think about money." "I suppose not," answered Mr. Camrox. "Every time I buy a picture the artist wants enough to keep him from thinking about money for the rest of his life."—Washington Star.

Yeast—It is difficult to tell the waiters from gentlemen d'ners at fashionable restaurants now. Crimsonbeak—Well, if you happened to search 'em when they went out you could tell the difference. The waiters have all the money in their clothes.—Yonkers Statesman.

Mr. Jagway (at a late hour, groping his way toward the foot of the stairs)—There's just twice as many chairs in this hallway as there ought t' be. My eyes might fool me on that prop'stion, o' course, but when I stumble 'gainst 'em, by George, I know they're there!—Chicago Tribune.

The millionaire from Pittsburg was observed to be loitering outside of the pearly gates. "Why don't you hurry up and knock?" queried a shade. "I'm waiting for that other chap to get ahead of me," whispered the Pittsburg millionaire. "And who is he?" "Why, a grafter from San Francisco. By the side of him I will seem as innocent as a lamb."—Chicago News.