The Roupell Mystery

By Austyn Granville

CHAPTER I.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"She is worse than unjust," he continued; "she has deliberately opened her ears to these tales of Chabot's and as deliberately shut them to my explanations. She has magnified my smallest misdemeanors into great faults."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Be careful! O, do be careful!"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Madame can still teach us inexperienced people how to enjoy life," he remarked, gallantly. "It remained for the United States to send to France another Ninon D'Enclos, to prove that charming women never grow old."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(To be continued.)

A Plague of Clocks.

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

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

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

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

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

REVOLUTIONIZE LEGISLATIVE METHOD

Adoption of Proposed Changes Will Make a Radical Change in Representation—Recall Measure Will Lift from Office All Who Fail to Do Their Duty

Drafts of constitutional amendments and laws sought to be adopted by the people of Oregon have been prepared and are being circulated throughout the state by a large committee of prominent men with a view of getting the measure before the voters for their consideration. Efforts will be made by those who have drafted and are promoting the measures to form a Peoples' Power league and to raise $3,000 to defray the expenses of the coming campaign to be carried on for the success of the measures.

Included in the list of the measures which are being presented are: An amendment to the state constitution providing for the recall of unworthy office holders; the draft of a bill for the election of United States senators by people's instruction; the draft of a bill providing for proportional representation and majority elections, and a draft of the Huntley corrupt practice act.

Those who have compiled the list of amendments and bills and are now sending them out and asking for the formation of a people's league are: Johnathan Bourne, Jr., Earl C. Bronaugh, Jerry Bronaugh, W. C. Bristol, Lee M. Clark, H. W. Drew, C. H. Gram, Thomas G. Greene, Clyde V. Huntley, J. E. Hedges, V. R. Hyde, G. W. Holcomb, Harry Lane, T. M. Leabo, T. A. McBride, Henry E. McGinn, E. S. J. McAllister, F. McKercher, P. McDonald, G. M. Orton, B. Lee Paget, C. Scheubel, Ben Selling, Alex Sweek, C. E. S. Wood, Frank Williams, W. S. U'Ren and John C. Young.

In discussing the measures which they have placed before the people the promoters set out their ideas as follows:

"We believe all citizens agree that every political party should be represented in the government in proportion to the number of its suporters among the people; that no political party should ever have a greater majority of the officers of government than it has of the votes of the people; that the people should be able to express their disapproval of any officer's acts by recalling him from office; that the people should elect and choose their United States senators; that character, and not the possession of wealth, or the secret or public support of great corporations, or wealthy citizens, should be of advantage to any man aspiring to public office. The measures herein offered by members of the People's Power league of Oregon are expected to aid in obtaining thee results."

In discussing the recall amendment to the constitution the proposers say it will be second only to the initiative and referendum. It is pointed out that the people of the state cannot now recall an officer once elected without proving him guilty of a crime beyond a reasonable doubt.

It is poinetd out that almost continually district attorneys and sheriffs contend they are unable to enforce the laws, or an assessor says it is impossible to assess all property fairly or to make great wealth bear its just share of the burden of government. It is argued that if one-fourth of the voters of the state or district could bring such officers face to face with public discharge for incompetency they would do their work or else the people would get officers who would do it for them. It is asserted that should the law be passed the mere threat of invoking it would be effective in the great majority of cases and the people would hear less of maintaining the dignity of an office and more of maintaining its efficacy.

In the draft itself it is provided that 25 per cent of the voters who cast their votes for an election of justice of the Supreme court at the election prior to the action for recall may file their petition demanding the recall of an officer who is not enforcing the law.

The petition shall set forth the reasons for demanding the recall and if the officer does not resign within five days after the filing of the petition then a special election shall be held within 20 days to determine whether or not the officer shall be recalled.

On the sample ballots at this election the petitioners shall set forth in not more than 200 words the reasons for their action while the officer shall set forth in another 200 words his justification for his acts. At this same election other candidates for the office shall be nominated and the one receiving the highest vote in nomination shall be deemed to be elected.

In the event the accused official receives the highest number of votes at the election he shall remain in office. Petitions of recall may be filed against members of the legislature after he has served five days or longer in the first session following his election. In the case of other officers six months must elapse before such a petition is filed.

After one recall petition has been filed and election held no other petition may be filed against the same officer unless the petitioners pay into the public treasury the whole amount of its expense for the preceding election.

The proposed bill for the selection of United States senators by a vote of the people is short and to the point. In effect it is nothing more than an expressed instruction of the legislature by the people to vote for one candidate for senator. It is argued that after such an instruction no politician would put his private opinion above the voted expression of the people of the state. The bill says:

"Section 1. That we, the people of the state of Oregon, hereby instruct our representatives and senators in our legislative assembly, as such officers, to vote for and elect the candidates for United States senator from this state who receive the highest votes at our general elections."

In argument for the proportional representation bill, it is shown that the present house of representatives in the Oregon legislature is composed of 59 Republicans and one Democrat. If the voters in the state were represented in proportion to the ratio of their numerical strength as shown at the last election the house would be composed of about 33 Republicans, 20 Democrats, four Socialists and three Prohibition members. It is further pointed out that since 1893 the Republicans have always had from 44 to 59 of the members of the house, though in 1895 and 1896 the vote of the Republican party throughout the state was less than one-half of all the votes cast.

It is argued that proportional representation would give each party a fair proportional vote in the legislature, just as it has in the general elections. The text of the proposed law is as follows:

"Section 16. In all elections authorized by this constitution until otherwise provided by law, the person or persons receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared elected, but provision may be made by law for elections by equal proportional representation of all the voters for every office which is filled by the election of two or more persons whose official duties, rights and powers are equal and concurrent.

"Every qualified elector resident in his precinct and registered, as may be required by law, may vote for one person for each office. Provision may be made by law for the voter's direct or indirect expression of his first, second or additional choices among the candidates for any office. For an office which is filled by the election of one person it may be required by law that the person elected shall be the final choice of a majority of the electors voting for candidates for that office. These principles may be applied by law to nominations by political parties and organizations."

The Huntley corrupt practice act is known to a great many of the people of the state, as it is the bill which was introduced in the last session of the legislature by Huntley, of Clackamas, and defeated on the ground that it was too voluminous and detailed.

In brief, it provides for the regulation of all elections as to campaign expenses, setting out a maximum expense bill for every office voted upon by the people, both at the primaries and at the general elections. These amounts are graded according to the importance of the office and the scope of the campaign necessary to present the candidate before the people. Rigid provisions are made against indirect campaign contributions and secret expenses, and it is required that all political parties must file statements of expense, as must the candidates, with the officials having record jurisdiction over the positions for which the candidates are contesting."

Drainer for Wash Boilers.

A simple device that greatly adds to the usefulness of the washboiler is a recent patent of an Oregon man. As shown in the illustration, it consists of a drainer that is attached to the top of the washboiler. The drainer is formed of a series of parallel rods, which rest on the top of the washboiler. Each rod terminates into a hook designed to engage the beaded rim of the boiler. Around the edges of the rod is a projecting ledge, to prevent the water dripping on the floor. After wringing out the clothes they are conveniently placed on the drainer, the water dripping back into the boiler. The device is readily removed when desired.

CLOTHES DRAINER

The Best Way to Do It.

A writer gives a recipe for making stale cookies fresh. The best recipe on the subject, however, is to make new ones. Fresh cookies are a delight, but stale ones an abomination, and no self-respecting housekeeper should tolerate them nor spend time trying to restore them to freshness

Help! Help! I'm Falling

Thus cried the hair. And a kind neighbor came to the rescue with a bottle of Ayer's Hair Vigor. The hair was saved! In gratitude, it grew long and heavy, and with all the deep, rich color of early life. Sold in all parts of the world for sixty years.

Ayer's SARSAPARILLA PILLS CHERRY PECTORAL

Made by J. C. Ayer Co., Lowell, Mass. Also manufacturers of

Now Objection to That.

"Go and take your bath, dear," said his mother, "like a little man."

"That's the way I want to do!" bowled Johnny. "Little men never take a bath, cepting they feel like it!"

Mothers will find Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup the best remedy to use for their children during the teething period.

Up to Date.

"Well, well," remarked old Mr. Fangton, "the young women of to-day are not what they were in my time."

"No?" replied Miss Hustle.

"No, indeed. Why, all you young women nowadays are muscular athletes."

"That's so. In the proud lexicon of feminine youth there is no such word as 'fail.'"—Philadelphia Press.

HOME MADE MIXTURE

IS Said to Promptly Relieve Backache and Overcome Kidney Trouble and Bladder Weakness Though Harmless and Pleasant to Take.

What will appear very interesting to many people here is the article taken from a New York daily paper, giving a simple prescription, as formulated by a noted authority, who claims that he has found a positive remedy to cure almost any case of backache or kidney or bladder derangement, in the following simple prescription, if taken before the stage of Bright's disease:

Fluid Extract Dandelion, one-half ounce; Compound Kargon, one ounce; Compound Syrup Sarsparilla, three ounces. Shake well in a bottle and take in teaspoonful doses after each meal and again at bedtime.

A well known authority, when asked regarding this prescription, stated that the ingredients are all harmless, and can be obtained at a small cost from any good prescription pharmacy, or the mixture would be put up if asked to do so. He further stated that while this prescription is often prescribed in chronic affections with splendid results, he could see no reason why it would not be a splendid remedy for kidney and urinary troubles and backache as it has a peculiar action upon the kidney structure, cleansing these most important organs and helping them to filter from the blood the foul acids and waste matter which cause sickness and suffering. Those who suffer can make no mistake in giving it a trial.

The Old Man's Experience.

"He's the boy after your own heart, isn't he?"

"Not much!" replied the old man. "He's the boy after my pocketbook!"—Atlanta Constitution.

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Cleanses the System Effectually, Dispels Colds and Headaches due to Constipation; Acts naturally, acts truly as a laxative. Best for Men, Women and Children. To get its Beneficial Effects Always buy the Genuine which has the full name of the Company

CALIFORNIA Fig Syrup Co.

Only when it is manufactured, printed on the front of every package.

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One size only, regular price 50¢ per bottle.