

# The Roupell Mystery

By Austyn Granville

## CHAPTER XV.

For a period of two weeks, immediately following the death of Mrs. Roupell, both Harriet and Emily Weldon remained in a state of seclusion within the chateau. By the provisions of Mrs. Roupell's will, in the absence of other claimants, her fortune was equally divided between her nieces.

It was a lovely June morning. The girls had received no news since the death of their aunt. Harriet, however, did not lose sight of the fact that she owed a duty to the living. It seemed selfish and wicked to pass the precious hours in mourning for one whom she could not recall, while a fate so dreadful hung over her lover's head. Emily, who readily surmised the state of her sister's feelings, was not backward in administering what comfort she could. She had written repeatedly to Dr. Paul Mason, urging him to spare neither labor nor money in his endeavors to extricate Van Lith from his terrible position.

One morning, looking out of the window, Harriet presently espied the sturdy figure of the doctor coming at a swinging gait across the park under the great trees. He had arrived in Villeneuve by the morning train, and made a short cut across the fields, instead of coming by the road through the village.

For the first time since the death of her aunt, Emily Weldon was in tolerable spirits. The cloud which had lowered so heavily over the future seemed lifting at last. According to the report of Dr. Mason, there was at least a possibility of the terrible mystery which enshrouded all their lives being cleared away—some hope that her sister's lover, whom she believed to be innocent, would be freed from the awful charge which hung over him.

As they walked along following the path which led them through the forest of Villeneuve, much of Harriet's usual gaiety and sprightliness of manner also returned. Her cheeks regained their color with the unobtrusive exercise; her pulse beat quickly again; the soft June breeze fanned her brow, and her dark eyes regained their luster.

Emily was similarly affected. Her spirits rose with every step they took. She even laughed when a little rabbit, started by their approach, sat upright to look at them for a moment, and then dashed off into the underbrush. "I had to laugh," she said, apologetically, "for if ever a rabbit showed surprise, that did; why, his expression was almost human."

"It is possible he may be, according to Hans Werlow," remarked the doctor. "And who is Hans Werlow?"

"He is a German friend of mine who has just revived a peculiar theory in regard to the soul. His idea is that the spirits of men and women who have misbehaved themselves on earth, will at death enter the bodies of animals, there to undergo a certain penance for the sins they have committed on earth. It is quite the talk of Paris, where it has become the fashion to point out an old cab horse and say 'That is Marat or Robespierre, working out his destiny.'"

Here Harriet was compelled to laugh outright. "How I should like to meet your friend Hans Werlow! You must contrive to invite him to visit us some day."

"Perhaps I shall, when all is bright again," replied Mason, "and it shall be, if I can make it so, or rather, if Monsieur Cassagne can, for the matter is in his hands now. All I can do is to wait and hope."

"You seem to have great confidence in your friend," remarked Emily.

"Yes, I have. In times of great trouble we are apt to lean on someone. One is glad to have somebody in such a crisis who can be trusted. It is the special mission of the strong to support the weak."

"As we lean on you," said Emily, quietly, "for comfort in our hour of need."

Her arm was within his own, and her fair, white hand was temptingly near. He placed his own upon it, with a gentle, reassuring pressure. The action was eloquent of assurance that she could trust to his friendship to the last. A stranger might have done the same, yet a strange thrill went through her. He saw her momentary embarrassment, and brightened color.

"For Harriet's sake and for yours," he said gently. Then to his surprise and delight, her fingers returned the pressure of his own. They seemed to say, "I understand you."

The sun was high in the heavens. It was very warm. They were yet some distance from Vertiers. They sat down on the mossy bank under the shade of one of the grand old trees. Taking no credit to himself, he told them what he had learned of M. Cassagne's doings; how thoroughly impressed he was with the innocence of Van Lith; how indefatigably he had worked, and what skill he had displayed in unraveling as far as he had gone the cause and motive for the crime.

"I don't see much to eat around here," remarked the doctor, finally.

"No, not here, of course," said Harriet. "But there's a cottage up there by the edge of the wood, where I dare say we can get some excellent milk and perhaps some white bread. Let us go there at once. I'm perfectly ravenous."

"Now, monsieur le docteur, you can exert your strength and your gallantry on Emily. You'll have to carry her across. She's the worst hand at jumping a ditch in the whole of France."

"I think you'd better trust me, Miss Emily," said Mason, laughing. "As you will, then," she said, simply; and the next moment his arms were around her.

There are opportunities in our lives which come to us but once. Fortune raps upon our door, and failing to gain admission, flies, never to return. Dr. Paul Mason held in his arms the woman he loved best on earth. Her head reposed on his shoulder. Her heart beat against his own. Her eyes looked languorously into his. It was an unparadise liberty for a staid scientific gentleman to take Harriet's back was turned toward them.

"I love you," he murmured. Then he stooped and kissed her on the lips. She flushed scarlet.

"Dr. Mason—Paul!" she exclaimed. He sprang across with her into the field. Harriet was out of sight. She had disappeared among the trees.

"Forgive me," he cried, and he took her hand before she could withhold it. "You tempted me beyond my strength. Say that you love me just a little bit."

"Why, nonsense! As if young ladies made confessions of that sort!" She was blushing furiously. It became imperatively necessary to pause a little to allow her to recover herself. They were entirely alone. For a brief minute they remained thus, looking into each other's faces.

Then they sauntered on, hand in hand across the plowed field, to where Harriet, with her mouth full of bread and cheese was impatiently awaiting them.

"What's the matter with you two?" she asked. "I thought you'd lost your way."

The train which bore Dr. Paul Mason back to Paris that night must have been conscious of the reluctance of one of its passengers, at least, to leave the neighborhood of Villeneuve, for never had a short trip seemed so long and tedious to a certain pleasant-faced, thoughtful, middle-aged gentleman, who sat and thrummed impatiently upon the window looking out upon the night.

"She has promised me," was the burden of his thoughts. "She has promised me that on the day on which Van Lith goes free, she will be my wife."

CHAPTER XVI.  
More than a week had elapsed since the departure of M. Cassagne, during which time his assistant in Paris, Charles D'Auburon, had received no word of him. One morning, however, he got a laconic message over the wire: "Rue de Provence, 2 p. m. Tuesday," by which he rightly surmised that his chief would meet him at his lodgings at the hour named. Almost on the stroke of the clock, D'Auburon heard the detective climbing the stairs leading to his apartments.

"He is pretty tired," cooed the young Frenchman. "He comes slowly."

He was right. Alfred Cassagne had no sooner entered the room than he flung himself heavily into a chair. His face wore an expression of anxiety. His dress was disheveled. He seemed dreadfully fatigued and dispirited. D'Auburon hastened to relieve him of his hat and light overcoat, and to take the hot wig from his head.

"You look worn out, old fellow," he exclaimed. "Pull off your boots and coat, and make yourself comfortable."

This invited, Alfred Cassagne divested himself of these articles of apparel, remarking as he pulled off his boots: "I haven't had these off for the last forty-eight hours—and they were too tight for me anyhow."

"Anything gone wrong?" "To be brief, all our work of the past two weeks has to be done over again."

"What?" exclaimed D'Auburon. "Do you mean to say we are on the wrong track?"

"I will tell you right now," replied M. Cassagne. "It is a peculiar story. I soon settled the question as to where Graham was."

"You have found him, then? and it is not he who committed the crime? Ah, that is bad. Our theory at once falls to the ground."

"Not so fast. Don't anticipate me. However, I may tell you that Henry Graham had no more to do with the murder of Madame Roupell than you or I had."

"It is very extraordinary."

"Not extraordinary at all. But let me begin at the beginning. I left Paris having in my possession certain facts upon which I knew I could thoroughly rely. One of them was that Graham had gone to Belliers, taking his little son with him; another that he had been in correspondence with a woman there whose first name was Helene, and whom I firmly believed to be the mother of the child."

"Yes, I recollect all that; go on, pray; what next?"

"Arrived at Belliers, I instituted every possible inquiry as to whether such persons as Graham and his son were known or had ever been known there. This search occupied the greater portion of my time. I was about to despair when I stumbled across an old priest who told me that he had known the man I was in search of."

"Are you a friend of his?" asked the priest. "I am," I replied. "Then you will be shocked when you hear what happened to him. Come with me, and I will tell you his story." I followed the priest, expecting to hear that he was the inmate

of some charitable institution, or having lost his reason was confined in some private asylum. He led the way to his church, and there in the little burying ground he pointed me out a grave. At its head was a stone on which I read: "HENRY GRAHAM. Aged 62 years."

"What?" exclaimed D'Auburon, astonished beyond measure. "Was it our Henry Graham? It can't be possible!"

"There is not the slightest doubt about it. When I saw that tombstone, you can imagine how I felt after all the time and trouble I had given this case. It was as if the bottom had dropped out of everything. The priest saw, no doubt, that I was strangely affected. He attributed my agitation to grief.

"Tell me something about my poor old friend," I said. "I have heard that he was in very bad circumstances. Did he die poor?"

"Very," replied the priest. "But he was cared for by mother church. That stone was erected by his son. Ah! he was a sad scamp, a willful fellow, who gave his poor father no end of trouble. But that was the old man's fault, partly. He did not somehow care to have the boy with him. He lived up on the hill, himself, for years, in very good style—he had money from somewhere, though I didn't know where he got it. But the child he didn't seem to be bothered about him."

"Didn't the child live with him? I inquired—not that I cared to know, but I wanted to keep the old man talking. I thought he might possibly drop something worth having."

"No," he went on—he was a garrulous old fellow. "No, he didn't seem to care to have the child with him. Until he was quite a big boy he remained in the care of a young couple in the village. The woman, I think, grew to be quite fond of him. But he was an unruly little rascal."

"All this is very serious. The result is that we are no further than when we started. What do you propose to do now? You're not going to give it up, are you?"

"Give it up! I wonder at your asking such a question. Certainly I shall not give it up."

"Now tell me," said the younger man, "what you propose doing? I am impatient to know."

M. Cassagne did not immediately reply. He closed his eyes like one who thinks deeply. At last he said: "I have mapped out a plan of action. And we must either carry it out to the hilt, or abandon it altogether. We have adopted from the start the theory that this crime was not committed for the purpose of robbery, but in the interest of some person who in some way would profit, either directly or indirectly, by the death of Madame Roupell. If we abandon that theory we have no other to work on. After the most careful examination of all the facts and circumstances, I fail to account for the murder upon any other hypothesis. Henry Graham being dead disproves that theory so far as he is concerned; but so far only."

"Admitted; but where have you to take his place? You must substitute someone, or your theory falls to the ground," remarked D'Auburon.

"Not necessarily," replied the detective. "We may substitute an entirely unknown person and call him X."

"Yes, that's all very well; but how to find him is the question."

"To which I certainly give you another answer. Listen attentively. I am about to begin my argument, and I want you to follow it as I pick it up to pieces. Commencing on the hypothesis already laid down, I shall proceed to demonstrate two things: First, the murder of Madame Roupell was committed by someone directly interested in getting her out of the way. Second, it was the work of some person who was acquainted with her affairs, either by actually having known her, or from information gathered from someone who was her intimate. You must not forget the missing will, portions of which are in my possession. You must not forget also the circumstances surrounding this mysterious crime. It was committed in the dead of night. The hour chosen by the murderer was one at which he expected to find the house entirely unprotected by the presence of men, for the butler and coachman, recaptured, slept over the stables and the presence of Van Lith and Chabot in the chateau that night was a contingency totally unforeseen by him, and one he could not have been prepared for. You may be sure that if he had foreseen it, he would have postponed his visit until some other occasion, for men of that stamp, though bold and unscrupulous, always take as little risk as possible."

"Granted," acquiesced D'Auburon. "Go on."

"The temporary check that our theory has received from finding that Henry Graham died before the murder was committed, in no way convinces me that he was not in any way implicated. Let us suppose that he knew of the existence of this will, which disinherited him; that he contemplated its destruction at some time and confided his plans to an accomplice; that for a long time no opportunity occurred like the one which did occur, when Van Lith left the chateau and the woman and her niece were practically at his mercy."

"Well, I will suppose all that, if you like; but still maintain that when Graham died all motive for the commission of the crime was removed. What benefit could a third party not interested at law in the disposition of Madame Roupell's property, possibly gain by having her die intestate?"

(To be continued.)

In all France there are only 1,100 persons who are millionaires in our sense of the word (in dollars). Of millionaires in francs there are about 15,000, apart from the 1,100 already counted.

## SAYS ERRORS IN NAVY UNFIT IT FOR BATTLE

Expert Declares the Boasted Fighting Ships Are Merely Death Traps.

## ARMOR BELT IS TOO LOW.

Defects in Construction Pointed Out and Promotion System Is Scored.

Henry Reuter Dahl, associate of the United States Naval Institute and American editor of "Fighting Ships," is the author of a startling article on "The Needs of Our Navy" in the January McClure's. Mr. Reuter Dahl's expertness on naval matters is not disputed and neither is his patriotism. He agrees with President Roosevelt that a navy must be built "and all its training given in time of peace" and with this in view he exposes defects in our first-class battle ships and armored cruisers which all but make them useless as efficient units in a fleet on heavy sea and in real action.

Mr. Reuter Dahl's criticisms appear to be the more amazing on account of the contention that most, if not all of the weak points he emphasizes, will be acknowledged by sea-going officers, "or, if the reader is sufficiently interested, by the testimony of his own eyes."

His principal points are the following: That the shell-proof armor of the American battle ships is virtually below the water line where it will do no good, leaving the broad side of the vessel exposed to the shells of the enemy. That this defect has been pointed

**DISTASTROUS MINE ACCIDENTS IN RECENT YEARS.**

	Lives lost.
1904—Albion colliery, South Wales.	290
1902—Fraterville, Tenn.	280
1902—Rolling Mill mine, Pennsylvania.	195
1903—Hanna, Wyoming.	175
1904—Lackawanna mine, Pennsylvania.	10
1904—Terco, California.	21
1905—Virginia City, Ala.	152
1905—Ziegler, Ill.	55
1905—Welsh coal mine.	120
1905—Diamondville, Wyoming.	78
1905—Kurtak, Russia.	290
1905—M. K. & T. Coal Company.	13
1905—Princeton, Ind.	35
1905—Coal mine in Prussia.	25
1905—Wilcox, W. Va.	25
1905—Bluefields, W. Va.	21
1906—Johnstown, Pa.	25
1906—Century, W. Va.	13
1906—Durham, England.	25
1906—Dutchman mine, Blusburg, N. M.	15
1906—Courriere mine, near Calais, France.	1,970
1906—Japan.	250
1906—Oakhill, W. Va.	28
1906—West Fork, Va.	25
1906—Quarto, Colo.	72
1907—Saarbus, Prussia.	22
1907—Primerio, Colo.	50
1907—Fayetteville, W. Va.	80
1907—Saarbruck, Prussia.	200
1907—Las Esperanzas, Mexico.	123
1907—Furbach, Germany.	73
1907—Monongahela, Pa.	30
1907—Toyoko, Japan.	470
1907—Tsing Tan, China.	112
1907—Nagsaue, Mich.	27
1907—Monongah, W. Va.	368
1907—Yolande, Ala.	81

**FARMING IN A DESERT.**  
There Are Colonizing Possibilities Even in Death Valley.

The craze of "homesteaking" which is seen to have reached its limit in the choice of Death Valley as a colonizing possibility. With the idea of transforming the most arid and most desolate portion of the great American desert into farm land, a number of tracts have been homesteaded, irrigation systems have been planned, and other preparations are now in progress for beginning the reclamation of Death

## A BLOT ON THE LAST CHAPTER.



out time and again; that other nations years ago recognized it as fatal and now have armor wrapped around the sides of their war vessels from five to seven feet above the water line.

That, despite repeated accidents on board our ships, the Navy Department year after year has approved of plans by which the greatest guns on the ships are directly above an open shaft leading to the powder magazine.

That other nations long since recognized the criminal stupidity of thus endangering the lives of officers and men and have remedied the defect by use of common sense and ordinary precautionary measures.

That, without regard to the protests of experts, our battle ships have been built so low that if the sea is heavy and ships are in action, the sea would wash over the vessels, render some of their most effective guns useless and practically leave the ship to the mercy of the enemy.

The officers in the American navy who command the battle ships and squadrons are too old; that under existing conditions young men cannot attain command, and that the service is badly crippled as a result.

That there is too much "bureau management" in Washington; too much red tape in the Navy Department; that American genius is stifled because of the bureau's immersion in details, and that with the Secretary of the Navy a civilian, he should have a board of expert advisers.

Other matters are dwelt on, but the foregoing are by far the most important. An afternoon's fight on water sealed Russia's fate in the recent war with Japan, says Mr. Reuter Dahl, and the same may well be true of the next war into which this nation is plunged. The issue is so important and the stake so tremendous that the sea power which is prepared in every respect to meet the crisis will be the victor.

Valley. A railroad is already built from Greenwater, at the southern end of the valley, to the borax works owned by the celebrated "Borax" Smith of 20-mile town fame, and there is an automobile stage line through the valley.

Even enthusiasts do not claim that piping water from Telescope Peak across the Funeral range into the valley is also under consideration.

**The Comic Side of The News**

Money is suffering from bad circulation. As Aurora (Ill.) physician has discovered that peanuts are a beauty diet. This ought to be a circus for some people.

An Eastern banker says, "We want more common sense." We want also more dollars, which are not so common now.

If prices of bread and meat keep on coming down, pretty soon the average man can afford to eat three meals a day. Chief Spryback, the Indian who drank a quart of blue paint, is carrying the "decorative interior" fad to an extreme. With 1,300,000 divorce suits in ten years, the United States is plainly in need of a national "Stay-Married Association."

After a while it may dawn on the army recruiters that the average soldier doesn't look upon \$13 a month as any great graft. Secretary Cortelyou is trying to impress us with the fact that stockings were made to be worn and not to hoard money in.

James J. Hill says the railroads need billions of dollars. From present prospects, it will be some time before they get 'em.

An Italian count one American hearse married turned out to be an ex-convict. Some of the other counts haven't yet been convicted.

## It Quiets the Cough

This is one reason why Ayer's Cherry Pectoral is so valuable in consumption. It stops the wear and tear of useless coughing. But it does more—it controls the inflammation, quiets the fever, soothes, and heals. Sold for 60 years.

Ayer's Cherry Pectoral has been a regular life preserver to me. It brought me through a severe attack of pneumonia, and I feel that I owe my life to its wonderful curative properties. —WILLIAM H. TRUITT, Wawa, Pa.

Made by J. C. Ayer & Co., Lowell, Mass. Also manufacturers of **SARSAPARILLA PILLS, HAIR VIGOR.**

**Ayer's**

Hasten recovery by keeping the bowels regular with Ayer's Pills.

**New Method.**  
Do you wish to choose a wife?  
Flip a coin.  
Or select your lot in life?  
Flip a coin.  
Of two evils make no choice.  
Save your time, and strength, and voice.  
There's a better way! Rejoice!  
Flip a coin.

Peat briquettes are now being made at Norfolk, Mass., with a machine. The peat is cut up by revolving knives like a meat chopper and then pressed through a die in a continuous bar, which is sliced into briquettes by a knife operated automatically.

**Ferry's Free Seed Book.**

For half a century thousands and thousands of farmers and gardeners have regarded "Ferry's Seed Annual" as the best guide not only for the buying of seeds, but for their planting and care. Daily reference to its text and illustrations proves it to be the actual beginning of a successful season. The new edition for 1908 is now ready for free mailing to all who write to the publishers for a copy.

It is a high tribute to the house of D. M. Ferry & Co. that two generations have planted Ferry's Seeds, each succeeding year adding to the confidence that "seed trouble" will never arise when Ferry's seeds are planted as "Ferry's Seed Annual" says they should be.

Another remarkable feature developed by the house of Ferry is the method of distributing seeds to dealers throughout the country so that the planters everywhere can secure at their home store exactly what they want when they want it, with the absolute assurance that it is fresh and fertile. Everyone should send at once to D. M. Ferry & Co., Detroit, Mich., for the 1908 edition of "Ferry's Seed Annual."

**Speed.**  
"It takes you a long time to pass a given point," said the minute hand, on passing.  
"I may be slow," answered the hour hand; "but it takes you all of sixty-six minutes to catch up with me."

**Blest is He.**  
There is no nobler monument Than rises from a life well spent; And blest is he of whom they tell "He did his work and did it well!" —Cleveland Plain Dealer.

**PILES CURED IN 6 TO 14 DAYS.**  
PAZO DISTMENT is guaranteed to cure any case of Itching, Bleeding or Protruding Piles in 6 to 14 days or money refunded, 50c.

**The Poor Cat.**  
A young wife called her husband on the telephone to tell him a tale of woe. In tear-choked accents she said: "That you, dearie? Well, you know that lovely chicken pie I made you—that horrid old cat came in and ate it up before I could stop it?"  
He answered: "Never mind, darling; I'll get you another cat."

## The General Demand

of the Well-Informed of the World has always been for a simple, pleasant and efficient liquid laxative remedy of known value; a laxative which physicians could sanction for family use because its component parts are known to them to be wholesome and truly beneficial in effect, acceptable to the system and gentle, yet prompt, in action.

In supplying that demand with its excellent combination of Syrup of Figs and Elixir of Senna, the California Fig Syrup Co. proceeds along ethical lines and relies on the merits of the laxative for its remarkable success.

That is one of many reasons why Syrup of Figs and Elixir of Senna is given the preference by the Well-Informed. To get its beneficial effects always buy the genuine—manufactured by the California Fig Syrup Co. only, and for sale by all leading druggists. Price fifty cents per bottle.