

The Roupell Mystery

By Austyn Granville

CHAPTER IX.—(Continued.)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER X.

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

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

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

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

But it was not alone in the field of business that de Vallar had achieved such a remarkable success. The vicomte was a brilliant, dark-eyed, handsome man, whom de Vallar claimed to have met abroad during his travels in the West Indies—Martinique, rumor had it. Her entertainments were much sought after, and who shall say that she was not a useful and excellent helpmeet? If a wealthy subscriber wavered, an invitation to the house where the vicomte drew himself from the messenger enterprise, and invested the increased capital which that speculation had brought him, in the Mutual Credit and Trust Company. A very limited number of shares of this concern had been offered to the public. Such was the prestige of the vicomte's name that they had been subscribed for over and over again in a very few hours.

Those deep blue eyes of the vicomtesse were not the only attraction at the de Vallar mansion. There was always high play for those who relished that kind of thing, and a sprinkling of those ladies whom such a woman as the de Vallar, as she was familiarly called at the clubs, would be sure to gather around her. There were women of great personal attractions, some of them divorcees, others on the high road to that enviable state, the

quasi-separation, which leaves the wife in a position to enjoy herself without danger of comment, and supplies her, under the French law, moreover, with the means of doing so.

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

Many, doubtless, who frequented the vicomte's establishment were totally unaware of the risks they ran. These were rarely suffered to go behind the curtain. M. Chabot was one of those who had for some time been admitted to the privileged circle without great care. To do him justice, it is highly probable that if the veil had been removed all at once, he would have ceased his visits altogether. He lived in bachelor apartments. Profoundly impressed with a sense of his personal dignity, he endeavored on a very small income to keep up appearances. Lately, however, he had joined de Vallar in more than one investment by which he had profited.

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

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

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

CHAPTER XI.

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

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

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

He walked on, totally unconscious of danger, a thick stick his only weapon, in all the confidence of a man who has never felt the crack of a brass knuckl in the hand of a garrotter or made the acquaintance of a sandbag.

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

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

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

D'Auburon put his hand in his pocket and flung into the air what silver and gold he had about him. It fell upon the pavement under the street lamp. They rushed at it like beasts. Then D'Auburon lost his nerve. He thought he saw his opportunity. He sprang into the middle of the street and ran like a deer. The mob rushed after him. He would have distanced them all, perhaps, he was

so very fleet, when the leader put his hand to his mouth and uttered a peculiar cry. Immediately from the alley ahead of him sprang two men. He was upon them before he knew it. He raised his heavy stick and struck one down. The other jumped at his throat and bore him to the ground.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Visitors on the Job.

The truly gifted engineer always makes one part of his work fit into another, and no energy is ever wasted.

A wealthy engineer who had set up a very fine place in the country, where he had carried out many pet constructive projects, was visited there by an old friend. The visitor had so much difficulty in pushing open the front gate that he spoke about it to the proprietor.

"You ought to look to that gate," he said. "A man who has everything exactly right should not have a gate that is hard to open."

"Ha!" exclaimed the engineer, "you don't understand my economy, I'm quite certain. That gate communicates with the waterworks of the house, and every person who comes through it pumps up four gallons of water!"—LONDON TIT-BITS.

Too Much to Bother With.
Sabbath School Teacher—Where have you been lately, Sadie? I haven't seen you at Sunday school for some time.
Sadie Smith—Oh, please, miss, I'm learning French and music now, so mother don't wish me to take religion just yet.—LONDON SKETCH.

A Better Brand.
Tom—Shortleigh has given up the idea of joining that north pole expedition. He says he doesn't care to court death in the arctic regions.
Jack—Well, I don't blame him—seeing that he is now courting a rich widow.

Wise.
He—When she married without her father's consent he cast her off without a penny.
She—How did they contrive to live?
He—They published a volume of their love letters.

No Wonder.
She—What did papa say when you asked him for me?
He—He fell on my neck and wept.

MORE MINERS DEAD

Third Explosion In Pennsylvania In Nineteen Days.

RAISES TOTAL DEATHS TO 550

Between 200 and 250 Men Entombed and Hope of Escape for Any Is Very Slight.

Jacobs Creek, Pa., Dec. 20.—An explosion of gas in the Darr mine of the Pittsburg Coal company, located here, yesterday entombed between 200 and 250 miners, and there is scarcely a ray of hope that a single one of them will be taken from the mine alive. Partially wrecked buildings in the vicinity of the mine and the condition of the few bodies found early in the rescue work indicate an explosion of such terrific force that it seems impossible that any one could have survived it. All of the 13 bodies taken up to this time are terribly mutilated, and three of them are headless.

This is the third mine disaster since the first of the month in the veins of bituminous coal underlying Western Pennsylvania and West Virginia, for the Naomi mine, near Fayette City, and the two mines at Monongah, W. Va., in which the earlier explosions happened, are in the same belt as the local workings. Yesterday's catastrophe swells the number of victims of deadly mine gas for the 19 days to between 550 and 600.

That this disaster does not equal or even surpass in loss of life and attendant horrors the one in West Virginia is due to the devotion to church duties of a considerable number of the miners. In observance of the church festival, many of the 400 or more men regularly employed at the mine did not go to work. Those who escaped through this reason are members of the Greek Catholic church and they suspended work to celebrate St. Nicholas' day.

As was the case at Monongah, the explosion followed a brief shut down. The Darr mine having been closed Tuesday and Wednesday. It was just 11:30 o'clock when the tenth trip of loaded cars had been brought out to the tipple that there came an awful rumbling sound, followed immediately by a loud report and a concussion that shook nearby buildings and was felt within a radius of several miles. At the same time there came out of the mouth of the mine an immense cloud of dense smoke and dust that floated across the Youghiogheny river.

Intuitively everyone in the vicinity knew what had happened and all started for the one place—the mouth of the mine.

As far as known only one man who went to work escaped. Joseph Mapleton, a pumper, emerged from one of the side entrances shortly after the explosion. He had left the part of the mine where most of the men were working and was on the way to the engine room for oil.

A considerable number of the miners were Americans, some of the others estimating that probably more than half of the victims are Americans, as the majority of the foreigners did not work.

The Darr mine is located on the west side of the Youghiogheny river, in Westmoreland county, along the line of the Pittsburg & Lake Erie railroad, 40 miles southeast of Pittsburg and 18 miles northwest of Conneville. It is one of the largest of the Pittsburg Coal company.

There was much drunkenness here tonight, some of the men who got a good start on account of the holiday continuing their carousal after the explosion in celebration of their escape. A new air shaft for the mine is being constructed, work having been started on it several months ago. Had this been completed, it is said, the loss of life today would have been much less serious.

Makes Traveling Safer.
Omaha, Neb., Dec. 21.—That safety devices save limbs and lives is demonstrated by the casualty report of the Union Pacific railroad. In spite of greatly increased traffic, the number of people killed and injured by the road during 1907 was 1,209, as compared with 2,097 in 1906. The report contains a list of the principal train accidents of the year, with a statement of the causes and consequences in each case. Each wreck was investigated by a special committee consisting of operating or other officials of the road.

New Grand Jury at Work.
San Francisco, Dec. 21.—The new county grand jury held its first session yesterday and after quickly perfecting the details of organization took up the case of the missing Colton securities and the connection of former officials of the California Safe Deposit & Trust company with the disappearance of valuable stocks and bonds. A number of witnesses were examined, and the taking of testimony had not been concluded when the meeting adjourned until today.

New Drydock Projected.
San Francisco, Dec. 21.—The Bulletin says that within a few months the Union Iron works will let a contract for a floating drydock large enough to accommodate all vessels that come to this port, with the possible exception of the Pacific Mail liners Mongolia and Manchuria.

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No. 4—
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Arrives Albany..... 5:52 P. M.

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No. 5—
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Arrives Corvallis..... 8:30 A. M.
No. 6—
Leaves Albany..... 9:22 P. M.
Arrives at Corvallis..... 9:00 P. M.

Trains for Albany.
No. 7—
Leaves Corvallis..... 8:50 A. M.
Arrives Albany..... 7:10 A. M.
No. 8—
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Leaves Albany..... 1:15 P. M.

No. 9—
Leaves Corvallis..... 4:00 P. M.
Arrives Albany..... 4:40 P. M.
No. 10—
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Arrives at Corvallis..... 12:58 P. M.

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