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The Roupell Mystery

By Austyn Granville

CHAPTER XXII.—(Continued.)

She set herself more firmly yet. The delicate fingers closed convulsively upon the arm of the chair.

"Do not ask me, monsieur. My duty is plain. If you will not spare us, I will be with him to the bitter end."

"You cannot mend matters," persisted the detective, "by staying here. My men surround the house. The cordon is complete. For the last time I ask you, will you leave this place?"

"And I answer you for the last time, I will not go."

"Nevertheless, I will do what I can for you," said M. Lazare. "It would be something to you to save your own name, would it not?"

She glanced through the portiere giving ingress to the salon beyond, where Jules Chabot was just visible as he sat at the end of the long card table. His face was deadly pale. He whispered from time to time with Goldstein, the broker. Her face flushed for an instant.

"What do you mean?" she ejaculated. "I am armed, madame. Take this pistol. He shall at least have a chance to save your honorable name."

"My honor," exclaimed the unhappy lady, recoiling in horror from the proffered weapon. "Put up your pistol. If I used it at all it would be to avenge myself on his captors. Oh! my son, my son!"

They had stepped unconsciously to the door of the conservatory. The detective turned and took her hand. His expressive face was aglow with some profound emotion.

"You have proved yourself worthy," he said. "The courage and devotion you have displayed in your hour of trial have given you a right to your reward."

"What do you mean, monsieur?"

"Come here," he said, suddenly, "come with me. I will tell you something you never knew. Something that has come to me as from the dead, to tell you that your instincts have erred, and you have been made the play of cruel, designing people."

He drew her hand within his arm and led her to the conservatory. They sat down upon the same seat where he had conversed with the Vicomtesse de Vallar.

"We shall not be interrupted here. I will tell you a story if you care to listen to it."

"Go on, monsieur," she murmured.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"The story," began the detective, "is of a young lady, a countrywoman of yours. It was years ago that this thing happened. She was quite handsome, very young, very romantic and foolish. When she was eighteen years of age she met an American. He was young, handsome, but dissolute and entirely unworthy of her love."

Mme. Colbert-Rempin inclined her head almost imperceptibly. She was listening to the history of her own life. How had this man brought to light the secrets of the past which had, years ago, as she believed, been hidden by the lapse of time."

"Yielding to the American's importunities, this young lady contracted with him a secret marriage. The result of their union was a child—a boy. The marriage was concealed successfully from the young woman's parents. By the contrivance of a friend and a pretended visit to the country, its consequences were also kept secret. Shortly after the birth of her child the young woman returned to Paris, where she attracted the attention of a very rich banker, who, ignorant of her past history, sought to make her his wife. It was more than probable that the lady would not have yielded to the temptation which was thrust before her but for two things, first, the discovery that her husband was a worthless, faithless fellow, second, the importunities of her parents, who at that time sustained some financial reverses. It appears that the banker held her father's obligations for an enormous amount. A condition of the marriage was that her parent should be released. A divorce was secretly secured from the first husband."

"Yes, it was to save my father," murmured Mme. Colbert-Rempin.

He went on:

"There was a little boy, as I have said, the fruit of this unhappy young woman's union with the American. This child was given out to a nurse to take care of. She was the wife of a loutish, industrious peasant, and of a peasant family herself, but she was beautiful for all that, as some of those women are. The American fell in love with her. He was called away to the United States and was absent three years. In his absence something had happened."

"What had happened?" murmured the woman beside him.

"The child entrusted to the woman's care had died. On the American's return to France, she presented her own child in its place. Her husband was dead. There was no one to contradict her."

A great sigh went up from the heart of Mme. Colbert-Rempin.

"Oh!" she cried. "Can this be true? My son is dead. How have you learned this?"

"Madame La Seur, who has blackmailed you systematically, two days ago met with a fatal accident. Unable to see you, she sent you in her last moments a full confession of the imposition she had so long practiced upon you and implored your forgiveness. This was taken by her messenger to the gate where you usually received her, and was promptly seized by one of my men. Here is the confession, from which you will learn that Philip

of his opponent sternly in the eye. He thought he discerned signs of weakening.

"Do you wish to divide, monsieur?"

"Certainly not!" came the quiet answer. "I am prepared to back my hand. It's your bet."

"I raise you one hundred thousand francs," and he placed that sum also on the table.

This seemed to stagger the Frenchman. It was the last money the detective had, but the other did not know it. M. D'Auburon's friend was indeed a millionaire.

The Frenchman arose from the table.

"Monsieur will excuse me for a moment," he said. "I do but go to an inner room to get some more money."

He shortly reappeared, making his way through the dense and excited throng around the table, with a huge bundle of notes in his hand. They were different from any which lay on the table; they were of the currency of the second empire. The detective's eyes glistened as he looked at them and his heart beat quickly, as drawing forth one hundred thousand francs from the bundle, the Frenchman covered his last bet. Then he added, as if desparately:

"And I raise it one hundred thousand francs more."

"I cannot meet it, monsieur," confessed the Swiss, "unless you accept my L. O. U."

"No, it must be cash. That is only fair. I am sorry monsieur has run beyond his bank. It is the rule of the game."

The Frenchman had his opponent fairly outbid. But the temptation to make more was strong upon him. The Swiss had already scribbled an L. O. U. for fifty thousand francs and pushed it toward him.

The Frenchman was about to play, and had raised his hand for that purpose when his eye caught the queer three-cornered piece of paper in front of him.

"I can't take L. O. U.'s," he said. "I must have absolute security."

Then they saw the Swiss take from the pocket of his vest a small locket and pass it over to the Frenchman.

"Isn't that good for something, monsieur?"

With his face grown suddenly an ashen gray the vicomte leaned over the table and almost whispered, as he clutched the locket in his shaking fingers:

"Where did you get this?"

The detective leaned forward and picked up one of the notes from the vicomte's bundle.

"From the place where you found this. Is it enough, or shall I show you something else?"

"What do you mean? Don't speak out here before everybody. Come with me."

The two players arose from the table and, passing out into the conservatory, left the money lying on the table, and a group of astonished guests looking blankly at it.

"They have both been crazy to bid like this," said one. "They have doubtless gone to make some arrangement together."

They waited for a minute—for five minutes. Still the players did not return. They were in the conservatory still, hidden from the eyes of the men. If the wondering group at the card table had been there, this is what they would have seen and heard:

They would have heard the vicomte imploring vainly for one chance; have seen him offering all he had to the Swiss if he would go back, and give him one opportunity to escape—would give him a bare ten minutes' start.

"It is more than I can do," replied the Swiss. "My men surround this house. You cannot possibly get away. Such money as I may, I give you. It is better than the guillotine."

He handed the vicomte his pistol, and, turning, walked toward the door of the conservatory. Only once he looked back to see the vicomte standing unsteadily by the fountain, a horrible expression upon his face.

He looked around at the Swiss beseechingly, but finding nothing there which might bid him hope, said despairingly:

"Good-by; I thank you even for this."

The Swiss walked on and reached the door of the conservatory. He leaned against the lintel of the door and waited. People were beginning to come and look for the players. The outer salon was already crowded.

Suddenly a pistol shot rang out and echoed through the whole lower floor of the house. The well-dressed, excited crowd rushed toward the conservatory.

The Swiss gentleman met them in the doorway. There was something in his face that stopped them irresistibly, on the very threshold.

"I wouldn't come in, if I were you. The vicomte de Vallar has shot himself. He was the murderer of Madame Roupell, the old lady who lived at Villeneuve," he went on to explain.

"Oh, Monsieur Lazare!"

"I am not Monsieur Lazare; I am Alfred Cassagne, the detective."

Then they looked upon him and wondered why they had not divined it from the first, for it was a face well known in the shop windows of Paris.

"You had better all go home," he suggested, and they went slowly away, all but one passing safely through the corridor of police.

As Herr Goldstein came out with the rest D'Auburon placed his hand upon his shoulder.

"I want you," he said.

"Another detective?"

"Yes, another detective."

They took him away unsuspecting, and Cassagne and D'Auburon went into the conservatory together. There across the coping of the marble fountain, prone on his face and stone dead, with the blood oozing slowly from a small wound in his forehead and tingling with red the green leaves of the water lilies, lay the body of Philip Graham.

Nearly a year had passed away since

the death of Philip Graham. The Chateau Villeneuve, from its long period of gloom and mourning, awoke one day with bells pealing joyously from its towers, its parks and woodlands smiling beneath the radiance of the summer sun.

From an early hour old Pierre had been awake, bustling hither and thither. His expected visitors, and long before their arrival, everything was in readiness for their reception.

The train from Paris was in at last, a merry group met off the platform, and its members took carriages for the chateau. The first one was occupied by Dr. and Mrs. Paul Mason. The second by Mr. and Mrs. Van Lith. The third by the mayor of Villeneuve and M. Delorme, the justice of the peace. The fourth by M. D'Auburon and M. Victor Lablanche, for the latter was a magnanimous gentleman, and could forgive a victory when a rival had fairly earned it.

It was noon. Breakfast was quite ready. The finest and choicest wines in the cellars of Villeneuve had been brought up. The cooks were growing nervous. Still they did not sit down to the table.

At last from the windows of the great drawing room they saw another carriage approaching.

"You may serve breakfast," cried the doctor. "It is he."

A very dapper, contented looking mortal alighted from the carriage and ascended the steps of the chateau, a lady on his arm, a little girl holding his other hand.

He stood confused for a moment as they all rushed forward to welcome him; but recovered immediately, he said:

"How do you do, my dear friends, this is my wife, Madame Cassagne; and here is our little daughter Celeste."

And in the midst of the congratulations old Pierre was heard to say:

"Breakfast is served."

(The End.)

When in Doubt, Study Stenography.

"When in doubt, study stenography," has been the motto of the world-beating business girl for the past ten years," says Anna Steese Richardson in the Woman's Home Companion, "with the result that thousands of young women, never intended by education, training or natural ability to become stenographers, have reduced office wages and overcrowded business marts, while hundreds of their sisters, who would develop into admirable office workers, have drawn back, alarmed by the ever-increasing army of incompetents."

"There is room in the business world for the competent, earnest stenographer, and opportunities for advancement were never better nor more numerous than to-day. There is no reason at all for the existence of the incompetent worker. She will find thousands there before her."

"Please bear in mind that stenography is a trade, and you must work at it months, and even years, before you become an expert and draw the same salary an expert milliner or fitter does. There is no royal road to success in stenography simply because your parents can afford to pay for your lessons. Many of my correspondents seem to think that they can skim through a business course just as they skimmed through school, without carrying away any thoroughly grounded information. My dear girls, some of you have fooled all your teachers all the years you went to school, but you cannot fool the man who pays your salary. The teacher was paid to do the best she could by you as a scholar, but your employer will pay you to give the best possible results for his business, and if you do not give them, he will find some one who can."

Slightly Mixed.

An Australian travelling in Japan fell into a mixed company in which was an English girl and an American woman. He made himself agreeable to the American at the start, she relates in her account of "A Woman Alone in the Heart of Japan," by remembering that Americans are accustomed to ride over Niagara Falls in tubs. Then he switched to the War of the Revolution.

"The whole thing was," he said, "that the colonies refused to send England troops to aid her in a foreign war, so the motherland resolved to subdue her naughty children."

"I guess you have confused it with the war in Africa," said the American.

"The Boer War has been so long drawn-out, you thought it was the same as the American Revolution."

The little English girl saw there was a misunderstanding somewhere.

"There was something about stamps in it," she suggested, weakly, "that caused some of the trouble."

"Something about stamps came a revolution!" demanded the Australian.

"Do you mean a stampede? Or merely postage-stamps? Did the rage for collecting exist in those days?"

But no one enlightened him on this, and he was left to assort history to suit himself.

The Daughter Balked.

"I thought," said old Groucherly, "that I could save money by refusing to give my consent to my daughter's marriage with young Huggins, but it's no go."

"What's the trouble?" queried the friend of the family.

"She declines to elope," explained the old man, with a large, open-faced sigh.

NEWS OF THE WEEK

In a Condensed Form for Our Busy Readers.

HAPPENINGS OF TWO CONTINENTS

A Resume of the Less Important but Not Less Interesting Events of the Past Week.

Four mail clerks were injured in a train wreck near Flovilla, Ga.

Work is about to begin in New York on a building for the various Irish societies.

New York hotel clerks have organized a club under the name of the Greeters.

Dr. Emil G. Hirsch, in an address at Chicago, denounced Germany as a menace to the peace of the world.

Sixteen persons were injured, five seriously, by the derailment of a car on the scenic railway at one of Denver's amusement parks.

Mrs. Yerkes, widow of Charles T. Yerkes, intends to devote a portion of her \$10,000,000 estate to the erection of a hospital in New York.

A man disguised as a girl obtained employment in the St. Louis telephone office and was only discovered when he proposed to one of the girls.

First-class west bound ocean travel is at its lowest ebb at the present time. Four big liners have just arrived with their cabins practically empty.

That there is less graft and business dishonesty in America today than there was in Washington's time, is the opinion of Dr. R. H. McArthur, of New York.

American naval officers were banqueting at Lima, Peru.

A Frenchman has invented a wireless electric power system.

Mexico is devising ways for the reform of the public credit system.

The Hearst Independence league has decided to nominate a national ticket.

The sale of ex-Minister Conger's Chinese curio collection has realized \$26,533.

Japan has asked for a larger appropriation for the Tokio exposition in 1912.

Russian authorities have captured plotters against the life of Grand Duke Nicholas.

Fire for a time seriously threatened a large part of the business district of New Orleans.

A mortgage for \$225,000 has been foreclosed on the Yerkes home and art collection in New York.

A Columbia, Mo., man has just died who for the past 20 years has drunk at least a quart of whisky a day.

The children of Eureka, Cal., have petitioned the forest service for the creation of a redwood national forest.

An attempt was made to burn the Seales hotel, at Muskogee, Okla., where about 100 delegates to the Democratic convention were quartered.

Railroad unions deny the necessity for wage reductions.

The Northern Pacific has reduced grain rates from Montana points to Chicago.

Senator Ankeny has given a banquet to a number of senators, at which he boomed the Seattle fair.

Early fruit and vegetables for shipment to the North have been damaged in Louisiana by a cold wave.

The Illinois Supreme court holds that a labor union's unfair list is in effect a boycott and can be enjoined.

The Pullman car company has issued orders to sell no liquors while the cars are passing through dry districts.

The cruisers West Virginia and Maryland are to undergo extensive repairs at the Mare Island navy yard.

Members of the marine hospital service have condemned a large part of San Francisco's packing house district. Changes will be made at once.

Consolidation of the large coal mining interests of Illinois and Indiana for the purpose of regulating the output and upholding prices is under way.

Russia discourages talk of war with Turkey.

The American fleet has arrived at Callao, Peru.

A number of Stanford students have been expelled for drinking.

Miss Dorothy Whitney, of New York, is to wed a Hungarian nobleman.

General Nelson A. Miles will make his home in Washington, D. C., hereafter.

Secretary of the Navy Mears will go to San Francisco to welcome the fleet on its arrival there.

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Arrives Albany..... 11:45 A. M.
No. 2—
Train leaves Albany..... 12:45 P. M.
" " Corvallis..... 1:12 " "
" " arrives Yaguins..... 5:40 " "
Trains To and From Detroit.
No. 3—
Leaves Albany for Detroit..... 7:30 A. M.
Arrives Detroit..... 12:30 A. M.
No. 4—
Leaves Detroit..... 1:00 P. M.
Arrives Albany..... 5:45 P. M.
Trains for Corvallis.
No. 5—
Leaves Albany for Corvallis..... 7:35 A. M.
Arrives Corvallis..... 8:30 A. M.
No. 6—
Leaves Albany..... 3:3 P. M.
Arrives at Corvallis..... 3:50 P. M.
No. 7—
Leaves Albany..... 7:35 P. M.
Arrives Corvallis..... 8:15 P. M.
Trains for Albany.
No. 8—
Leaves Corvallis..... 6:30 A. M.
Arrives Albany..... 7:40 A. M.
No. 9—
Leaves Corvallis..... 12:30 P. M.
Arrives Albany..... 1:15 P. M.
No. 10—
Leaves Albany..... 6:00 P. M.
Arrives Albany..... 6:40 P. M.
No. 11—
Leaves Corvallis..... 11:15 A. M.
Arrives Albany..... 12:55 P. M.
No. 12—
Leaves Albany..... 12:35 P. M.
Arrives at Corvallis..... 1:15 P. M.
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