

The Mystery of The Yellow Room

By GASTON LEROUX

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never before seen him, but I knew him well by reputation. At that time, before Rouletabille had given proof of his unique talent, Larsan was reputed as the most skillful unraveler of the most mysterious and complicated crimes. His reputation was world-wide, and the police of London and even of America often called him to their aid when their own national inspectors and detectives found themselves at the end of their wits and resources.

No one was astonished, then, that the head of the Paris police had at the outset of the mystery of the yellow room telegraphed his precious subordinate in London, where he had been sent on a big case of stolen securities, to return with all haste. Frederick made all speed, doubtless knowing by experience that if he was interrupted in what he was doing it was because his services were urgently needed in another direction, so, as Rouletabille said, he was that morning already "at work." We soon found out in what it consisted.

What he was continually looking at in the palm of his right hand was nothing but his watch, the minute hand of which he appeared to be noting intently. Then he turned back, still running, stopping only when he reached the park gate, where he again consulted his watch and then put it away in his pocket, shrugging his shoulders with a gesture of discouragement. He pushed open the park gate, reclosed and locked it, raised his head and through the bars perceived us. Rouletabille rushed after him, and I followed. Frederick Larsan waited for us.

"M. Fred," said Rouletabille, raising his hat and showing the profound respect based on admiration, which the young reporter felt for the celebrated detective, "can you tell me whether M. Robert Darzac is at the chateau at this moment? Here is one of his friends of the Paris bar, who desires to speak with him."

"I really don't know, M. Rouletabille," replied Fred, shaking hands with my friend, whom he had several times met in the course of his difficult investigations. "I have not seen him."

"The concierges will be able to inform us, no doubt?" said Rouletabille, pointing to the lodge, the door and windows of which were close shut.

"The concierges will not be able to give you any information, M. Rouletabille."

"Why not?" "Because they were arrested half an hour ago."

"Arrested?" cried Rouletabille. "Then they are the murderers?"

Frederick Larsan shrugged his shoulders.

"When you can't arrest the real murderer," he said, with an air of supreme irony, "you can always indulge in the luxury of discovering accomplices."

eral bearing elegant and gentlemanly. Larsan turned his head at the sound of a vehicle which had come from the chateau and reached the gate behind him. We recognized the cab which had conveyed the examining magistrate and his registrar from the station at Epinau.

"Ah!" said Frederic Larsan. "If you want to speak with M. Robert Darzac, he is here."

The cab was already at the park gate, and Robert Darzac was begging Frederic Larsan to open it for him, explaining that he was pressed for time to catch the next train leaving Epinau for Paris. Then he recognized me. While Larsan was unlocking the gate M. Darzac inquired what had brought me to the Glandier at such a tragic moment. I noticed that he was frightfully pale and that his face was lined as if from the effects of some terrible suffering.

"Is mademoiselle getting better?" I immediately asked.

"Yes," he said. "She will be saved perhaps. She must be saved!"

He did not add "or it will be my death," but I felt that the phrase trembled on his pale lips.

Rouletabille intervened: "You are in a hurry, monsieur, but I must speak with you. I have something of the greatest importance to tell you."

Frederic Larsan interrupted: "May I leave you?" he asked of Robert Darzac. "Have you a key or do you wish me to give you this one?"

"Thank you. I have a key and will lock the gate."

Larsan hurried off in the direction of the chateau, the imposing pile of which could be perceived a few hundred yards away.

Robert Darzac, with knit brow, was beginning to show impatience. I presented Rouletabille as a good friend of mine, but as soon as he learned that the young man was a journalist, he looked at me very reproachfully, excused himself under the necessity of having to reach Epinau in twenty minutes, bowed and whipped up his horse. But Rouletabille had seized the bride and, to my utter astonishment, stopped the carriage with a vigorous hand. Then he gave utterance to a sentence which was utterly meaningless to me.

"The presbytery has lost nothing of its charm, nor the garden its brightness."

The words had hardly left the lips of Rouletabille than I saw Robert Darzac quail. Pale as he was, he became paler. His eyes were fixed on the young man in terror, and he immediately descended from the vehicle in an inexpressible state of agitation.

"To shake you by the hand." Darzac shrank back.

"What does that mean?" Evidently he understood, what I also understood, that my friend suspected him of the abominable attempt on the life of Mlle. Stangerson. The impression of the blood stained hand on the walls of the yellow room was in his mind. I looked at the man closely. His haughty face, with its expression ordinarily so straightforward, was at this moment strangely troubled. He held out his right hand and, referring to me, said:

"As you are a friend of M. Sainclair, who has rendered me invaluable services in a just cause, monsieur, I see no reason for refusing you my hand."

Rouletabille did not take the extended hand. Lying with the utmost audacity, he said:

"Monsieur, I have lived several years in Russia, where I have acquired the habit of never taking any but an un-gloved hand."

I thought that the Sorbonne professor would express his anger openly, but, on the contrary, by a visibly violent effort, he calmed himself, took off his gloves and showed his hands. They were unmarked by any cleatric.

"Are you satisfied?" "No!" replied Rouletabille. "My dear friend," he said, turning to me. "I am obliged to ask you to leave us alone for a moment."

I bowed and retired, stupefied by what I had seen and heard. I could not understand why M. Robert Darzac had not already shown the door to my impertinent, insulting and stupid friend. I was angry myself with Rouletabille at that moment for his suspicions which had led to this scene of the gloves.

For some twenty minutes I walked about in front of the chateau, trying vainly to link together the different events of the day.

When Rouletabille came out of the chateau in the company of M. Robert Darzac, extraordinary to relate, I saw at a glance that they were the best of friends.

"We are going to the yellow room. Come with us," Rouletabille said to me. "You know, my dear boy, I am going to keep you with me all day. We'll breakfast together somewhere about here."

"You'll breakfast with me here, gentlemen?"

"No, thanks," replied the young man. "We shall breakfast at the Donjon Inn."

the yellow room while the doors and windows were closed. We were with him in the lodge of the concierges, and yet we heard nothing—not a sound. The concierges had lied, of that there can be no doubt. They must have been already waiting not far from the pavilion—waiting for something! Certainly they are not to be accused of being the authors of the crime, but their complicity is not improbable. That was why M. de Marquet had them arrested at once.

"If they had been accomplices," said Rouletabille, "they would not have been there at all. When people throw themselves into the arms of justice with the proofs of complicity on them, you can be sure they are not accomplices. I don't believe there are any accomplices in this affair."

"Then why were they abroad at midnight? Why don't they say?" "They have certainly some reason for their silence. What that reason is has to be found out, for, even if they are not accomplices, it may be of importance. Everything that took place on such a night is important."

We had crossed an old bridge thrown over the Douve and were entering the part of the park called the Oak grove. The oaks here were centuries old. Autumn had already shriveled their tawny leaves. This place, which mademoiselle found cheerful and in which she lived in the summer season, appeared to us as sad and funereal now.

The soil was black and muddy from the recent rains and the rotting of the alien leaves. The trunks of the trees were black, and the sky above us was low, as if in mourning, charged with great, heavy clouds.

And it was in this somber and desolate retreat that we saw the white walls of the pavilion as we approached. It was a queer looking building, without a window visible on the side by which we neared it. A little door alone marked the entrance to it. It might have passed for a tomb, a vast mausoleum in the midst of a thick forest. As we came nearer we were able to make out its disposition. The building obtained all the light it needed from the open country. The little door closed on the park. M. and Mlle. Stangerson must have found it an ideal seclusion for their work and their dreams.

The pavilion had a ground floor which was reached by a few steps, and above it was an attic, with which we need not concern ourselves. The rooms of the pavilion were as follows:

The yellow room, with its one window and its one door opening into the laboratory.

The laboratory, with its two large barred windows and its doors, one serving for the vestibule, the other for the yellow room.

The vestibule, with its unbarred window and door opening into the park.

The lavatory, between the vestibule and the yellow room.

Besides these chambers there was a light of stairs leading to the attic. The only chimney was the large one in the laboratory.

Before mounting the three steps leading up to the door of the pavilion Rouletabille stopped and asked M. Darzac point blank:

"What was the motive for the crime?" "Speaking for myself, monsieur, there can be no doubt on the matter," said Mlle. Stangerson's fiancee, greatly distressed.

"The marks of the fingers, the deep scratches on the chest and throat of Mlle. Stangerson, show that the wretch who attacked her attempted to commit a frightful crime. The medical experts who examined these traces yesterday affirm that they were made by the same hand as that which left its red imprint on the wall—an enormous hand, monsieur, much too large to go into my gloves," he added, with an indefinable smile.

Why is M. de Marquet surrounding this mutton bone with so much mystery? No doubt for the purpose of facilitating the inquiries of the agents of the police. He imagines perhaps that the owner of this instrument of crime, the most terrible invented, is going to be found among those who are well known in the slums of Paris who use it."

"Has a mutton bone been found in the yellow room?" I asked him.

"Yes, monsieur," said Robert Darzac, "at the foot of the bed, but I beg of you not to say anything about it." (I made a gesture of assent.) "It was an enormous mutton bone, the top of which, or, rather, the joint, was still red with the blood of the frightful wound. It was an old bone, which may, according to appearances, have served in other crimes. That's what M. de Marquet thinks, who has had it sent to the municipal laboratory at Paris to be analyzed. In fact, he thinks he has detected on it not only the blood of the last victim, but other stains of dried blood, evidences of previous crimes."

"A mutton bone in the hand of a skilled assassin is a frightful weapon," said Rouletabille, "a more certain weapon than a heavy hammer."

"The scoundrel has proved it to be so," said M. Robert Darzac sadly. "The joint of the bone found exactly fits the wound inflicted. My belief is that the wound would have been mortal if the murderer's blow had been arrested in the act by Mlle. Stangerson's revolver. Wounded in the hand, he dropped the mutton bone and fled. Unfortunately the blow had been already given, and mademoiselle was stunned after having been nearly strangled. If she had succeeded in wounding the man with the first shot of the revolver, she would doubtless have escaped the blow with the bone. But she had certainly employed her revolver too late. The first shot deviated and lodged in the ceiling. It was the second only that took effect."

Having said this, M. Darzac knocked at the door of the pavilion. I must confess to feeling a strong impatience to reach the spot where the crime had been committed. It was some time before the door was opened by a man whom I at once recognized as Daddy Jacques.

He appeared to be well over sixty years of age. He had a long white beard and white hair, on which he wore a flat Basque cap. He was dressed in a complete suit of chestnut colored velvet, worn at the sides; sabots were on his feet. He had rather a waspish looking face, the expression of which lightened, however, as soon as he saw M. Darzac.

"Friends," said our guide. "Nobody in the pavilion, Daddy Jacques?"

"I ought not to allow anybody to enter, M. Robert, but of course the order does not apply to you. These gentlemen of justice have seen everything there is to be seen and made enough drawings and drawn up enough reports."

"Excuse me, M. Jacques, one question before anything else," said Rouletabille.

"What is it, young man? If I can answer it?"

"Did your mistress wear her hair in bands that evening? You know what I mean—over her forehead?"

"No, young man. My mistress never wore her hair in the way you suggest, neither on that day nor on any other. She had her hair drawn up, as usual, so that her beautiful forehead could be seen, pure as that of an unborn child!"

Rouletabille grunted and set to work examining the door, finding that it fastened itself automatically. He satisfied himself that it could never remain open and needed a key to open it. Then we entered the vestibule, a small, well lit room paved with square red tiles.

"Ah, this is the window by which the murderer escaped!" said Rouletabille.

Notice to Investors

We have a few first-class farm mortgages for sale which we can dispose of to persons having money for investment to net them 6 per cent interest. These mortgages are guaranteed both as to principal and interest.

EXECUTORS NOTICE TO CREDITORS.—Creditors and others having claims against the Estate of Margaret Nolan, late of the Town of Lindsay, in the County of Victoria, Widow, deceased, who died on or about the 22nd day of June, 1910, are hereby notified pursuant to R. S. O. 1387, Chap. 129, to send in their claims duly verified to the undersigned Solicitors on or before MONDAY, the FIRST DAY OF AUGUST, 1910, after which date the Executors will distribute the Estate having regard only to the claims of which they shall then have notice.

Dated at Lindsay, this Ninth day of July, 1910.

STEWART & O'CONNOR, Solicitors for Honorable George McHugh and Peter Kennedy, Executors.

STRAYED

STRAYED—Into the premises of the undersigned, lot 20, Con. 9, Eldon, on June 23, 1 yearling colt. Owner can have same by proving property and paying expenses. James A. McNabb, Kirkfield, Ont.—w3.

WANTED

BOY WANTED—To learn dry goods business, out of town boy preferred. E. E. W. MCGAFFEY.—wtf.

WANTED—Teacher, for School Section No. 7, Mariposa, Duties to commence August 15th, 1910. State salary and experience. Apply to Henry Bowes, sec.-treas., Oakwood P. O.—w3 d1S.

WANTED—A certificate teacher for Ursa school from August 1st to Christmas holidays. State salary required. Apply to S. KETTLER, Ursa Sec.-Treas. (Not Catholic or Mormon)—w3d1S.

WANTED—Qualified teacher, Protestant, for S. S. No. 11, Verulam. Salary \$450. Apply JAS. POWELLSON, Fenelon Falls, Ont.—dlw3.

FARM FOR SALE

FARM FOR SALE—100 acres, east half lot 16, con. 9, Ops, all cleared, good frame house and frame barn with stone stabling. 5 miles from town of Lindsay; the Hooley property. Terms easy: wants to sell at once. For further particulars apply to ELIAS BOWES, Real Estate Agent, Lindsay.—wtf.

FARM FOR SALE—West part of lot 7, Con. 14, Mariposa, 145 acres, about 95 under cultivation, 12 acres pasture. Good buildings, 2 1/2 acres in orchard and all fruits. 31/2 acres in orchard and small fruits. Apply to Wm. L. Stone, Woodville.—w5

FARM FOR SALE—Known as the Ewers homestead, Wanchester, 2 miles from Port Perry, containing between 95 and 100 acres. Clay loam Bids or communications received and particulars from NORMAN EWERS, 69 Alexander-st., Toronto.—wtf.

FARM FOR SALE—Containing 140 acres, more or less, being part of lot 14 and 15 in 8 con. Mariposa. Brick house, frame barn, 40 by 104 with stone wall and first class stabling. Water in front of horses and cattle with taps. Good hog pen. Driving house. Hen house, cement floors in them all. A never-failing well, well fenced, adjoining the thriving village of Oakwood, Known as the W. A. Silverwood farm. Would like to sell at once. For further particulars apply to Elias Bowes, Real Estate agent, Lindsay.

FARM FOR SALE

FARM FOR SALE—100 acre farm more or less, for sale, being lot 5 in Con. 10, Eldon. Good log house, good frame barn and stone stabling. 2 good wells, All cleared and in good state of cultivation. Well fenced, 1 1/2 acres orchard. Some plum and pear trees. Wants to sell at once. For further particulars apply to Elias Bowes Real estate agent, Lindsay.—w4.

FARM FOR SALE—100 acres more or less for sale in Fenelon, good frame barn, 50 acres cleared, balance tamarac swamp, never failing spring, land not cut up by stream. Near a school, post office, blacksmith shop. Would make a good ranch or grain farm. For further particulars apply to Elias Bowes, real estate agent.—w4.

FARM TO RENT—West 1/2 lot 12, Con. 8, Fenelon, containing 120 acres all cleared, 70 acres grain land, the balance hay or pasture. Good bank barn with wind mill, hay slings, also stone hog pen, hen house, driving shed and a comfortable house, two good wells, large orchard. No stumps or stone piles on the farm, 1 mile from school, church and post office Five miles from Fenelon Falls. Possession to plough this fall. Possession on 1st of March, 1911. Apply to the owner, Albert E. Minthorne, Rose-dale, Ont.—w3.

FARM FOR SALE—Situating one and one-half miles from Fair-bairn, being lot 30, in Con. 7, Verulam, containing 200 acres and also the east half of lot 30 in the 6th. con. 150 acres clear and in first-class state of cultivation, well watered by a never-failing spring creek and good wells, windmill on barn, with water-bowls and piping, well fenced. For further particulars apply to ALEX. CONNELL, Bury's Green, Ont.—w3.

FARM FOR SALE—Improved farm of one hundred and fifty acres, more or less, being composed of the South Half of Lot Twenty (20) in the Tenth and the West part of Lot Twenty (20) in the eleventh Concession of the Township of Ops. This land is good clay loam, suitable for any kind of grain, drained, and all cleared but about Fifteen (15) acres of pasturage, through which there is running water. Situated three miles East of Lindsay, on good gravel road. There is a frame dwelling, kitchen and woodshed. Large frame barn 45x75 feet with stone foundation and stabling for all kinds of stock. Apply to MOORE & JACKSON, Solicitors, Lindsay, Ont. or A. BLACKWELL, 1 Notre Dame Street, West, Montreal.—wtf.

FARM FOR SALE—The N 1/2 of Lot 5, Con. 2, and the East Pt. of the S 1/2 of Lot 4, Con. 2, in the Township of Emily, 150 acres. About 140 acres cleared, balance woodland and swamp. Two miles south of Omeme. Well built on Good orchard. Well watered by a running stream, spring and wells. Good all round farm and in good condition. School convenient. For terms and particulars apply to Mrs. David Toole, Lock box 205, Omeme, Ont.—w4.

FOR SALG—For \$1,500. I will sell the south east quarter of lot 16 13 con. Mariposa, containing 50 acres with about 12 or 15 acres cleared and under cultivation, the rest good pasture land, as there is a stream of water running through it. A good cedar log house and stable. Terms easy. Neil McCorvie, Midland.

FARM FOR SALE—Lot 15, con. 2, Fenelon, containing 93 1/2 acres, more or less, adjoining the village of Islay. 90 acres cleared and about 4 1/2 acres hardwood bush. New frame barn 50x65 on stone wall with first-class stabling complete, cement floor. Log house, well finished inside, partly plastered and partly boarded. School post office and blacksmith shop within a few rods of farm, 6 miles from Cambray station. Grass Hill and Cameron grain markets. The property of JOHN R. COWISON. For further particulars apply to Elias Bowes Real Estate Agent, Lindsay.—wtf.

in Toronto this week. Dale, and Miss Burns, off Toronto, Mrs. Randolph McDonald, of Rose passed through town on Tuesday on their way to Toronto.

Whalen has given them a contract. They are doing first class work and several of the farmers are likely to follow Will's example.

Bert Jewell... and Mrs. Lee...

is not tired of having a silo yet, as he is putting up a cement

best wishes go with them. Mr. Ebb Hill takes the farm they leave.

Form The Good Habit