The Mystery of The Yellow Room

By GASTON LEROUX

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CHAPTER XI.

In Thich Frederic Larsan Explains How the Murderer Was Able to Get Out of the Yellow Room.

MONG the mass of papers, legal documents, memoirs and extracts from newspapers which I have collected relating to the mystery of the yellow room there is one very interesting piece. It is a detail of the famous examination which took place that afternoon in the laboratory of Professor Stangerson before the chief of police. This narrative is from the pen of M. Maleine, the registrar, who, like the examining magistrate, had spent some of his leisure time in the pursuit of litera-

THE REGISTRAR'S NARRATIVE.

The examining magistrate and 1, says M. Maleine, found ourselves in the yellow room in the company of the builder who had constructed the pavilion after Professor Stangerson's designs. He had a workman with him. M. de Marquet had had the walls laid entirely bare-that is to say, he had had them stripped of the paper which had decorated them. Blows with a pick here and there satisfied us of the nonexistence of any sort of opening. The floor and the ceiling were thoroughly sounded. We found nothing. There was nothing to be found. M. de Marquet appeared to be delighted and never ceased repeating:

"What a case! What a case! We shall never know, you'll see, how the murderer was able to get out of this room!"

Then suddenly, with a radiant face. he called to the officer in charge of the gendarmes

"Go to the chateau," he said, "and request M. Stangerson and M. Robert Darzac to come to me in the laboratory, also Daddy Jacques, and let your men bring here the two conclerges."

Five minutes later all were assembled in the laboratory. The chief of police, who had arrived at the Glandier, joined us at that moment. I was seated at M. Stangerson's desk ready for work when M. de Marquet made us the following little speech, as original as it was unexpected:

"With your permission, gentlemen, as examinations lead to nothing, we will for once abandon the old system of interrogation. I will not have you brought before me one by one, but we will all remain here as we are-M. Jacques and the two concierges, the chief of police, the registrar and myment forget that they have been arrested. We are going to confer together. We are on the spot where the crime was committed. We have nothing else to discuss but the crime. So let us discuss it freely, intelligently or otherwise, so long as we speak just what is in our minds. There need be no formality or method, since this won't help us in any way."

Then, passing before me, he said in a low voice:

"What do you think of that, eh? What a scene! Could you have thought of that? I'll make a little piece out of it for the vaudeville." And he rubbed his hands with glee.

I turned my eyes on M. Stangerson. The hope he had received from the doctor's latest reports, who had stated that Mile. Stangerson might recover from her wounds, had not been able to efface from his noble features the marks of the great sorrow that was upon him. He had believed his daughter to be dead, and he was still broken by that belief. His clear, soft blue

eyes expressed infinite sorrow. "Now, M. Stangerson," said M. de Marquet, with somewhat of an important air, "place yourself exactly where you were when Mile. Stangerson left

you to go to her chamber." M. Stangerson rose and, standing at a certain distance from the door of the yellow room, said in an even voice and without the least trace of emphasis, a voice which I can only describe as a dead voice:

"I was here. About 11 o'clock, after I had made a brief chemical experiment at the furnaces of the laboratory, needing all the space behind me, I had my desk moved here by Daddy Jacques, who spent the evening in cleaning some of my apparatus. My daughter had been working at the same desk with me. When it was her time to leave she rose, kissed me and bade Daddy Jacques good night. She had to pass behind my desk and the door to enter her chamber, and she could do this only with some difficulty-that is to say, I was very near the place where the crime occurred later."

"And the desk?" I asked, obeying, in thus mixing myself in the conversation, the express orders of my chief. "As soon as you heard the cry of 'Murder! followed by the revolver shots,

what became of the desk?" Daddy Jacques answered.

"We pushed it back against the wall here, close to where it is at the present moment, so as to be able to get at the door at once."

I followed up my reasoning, to which, however, I attached but little

importance, regarding it as only a weak hypothesis, with another ques-

"Might not a man in the room, the desk being so near to the door, by stooping and slipping under the desk have left it unobserved?"

"You are forgetting." interrupted M. Stangerson wearily, "that my daughter had locked and bolted the door, that the door had remained fastened, that of a strong character, "I understand we vainly tried to force it open when we heard the noise and that we were at the door while the struggle between the murderer and my poor child was going on immediately after we heard her stifled cries."

I rose from my seat and once more examined the door with the greatest care. Then I returned to my place, with a despairing gesture.

"If the lower panel of the door," I said, "could be removed without the whole door being necessarily open the problem would be solved. But unfortunately that last hypothesis is untenable after an examination of the door. It's of oak, solid and massive. You can see that quite plainly in spite of the injury done in the attempt to burst it open."

"Ab," cried Daddy Jacques. "It is an old and solid door that was brought from the chateau. They don't make such doors now. We had to use this bar of iron to get it open, all four of us, for the concierge, brave woman she is, helped us. It pains me to find them both in prison now."

Daddy Jacques had no sooner uttered these words of pity and protestation than tears and lamentations broke out from the concierges. I never saw two accused people crying more bitterly. I was extremely disgusted. Even if they were innocent, I could not understand how they could behave like that in the face of misfortune. A dignified bearing at such times is better than tears and groans, which most often are feigned.

"Now, then, enough of that sniveling," cried M. de Marquet, "and in your interest tell us what you were doing under the windows of the pavilion at the time your mistress was being attacked, for you were close to the pavilion when Daddy Jacques met

"We were coming to help!" they whined.

"If we could only lay hands on the murderer he'd never taste bread ngain!" the woman gurgled between her sobs.

As before, we were unable to get two connecting thoughts out of them. Stangerson, M. Robert Darzac, Daddy They persisted in their denials and swore by heaven and all the saints that they were in bed when they self. We shall all be on the same foot- heard the sound of the revolver shot. 'It was not one, but two snow

were fired. You see you are lying. If you had heard one you would have heard the other."

"Mon Dieu! Monsieur, it was the second shot we heard. We were sound asleep when the first shot was

"Two shots were fired," said Daddy Jacques. "I am certain that all the cartridges were in my revolver. We found afterward that two had been exploded, and we heard two shots behind the door. Was not that so, M. Stangerson?"

"Yes," replied the professor, "there were two shots-one dull and the other sharp and ringing."

"Why do you persist in lying?" cried M. de Marquet, turning to the concierges. "Do you think the police are the fools you are? Everything points to the fact that you were out of doors and near the pavilion at the time of the tragedy. What were you doing there? So far as I am concerned," he said, turning to M. Stangerson, "I can only explain the escape of the murderer on the assumption of help from these two accomplices. As soon as the door was forced open and while you, M. Stangerson, were occupied with your unfortunate child the concierge and his wife facilitated the flight of the murderer, who, screening himself behind them, reached the window in the vestibule and sprang out of it into the park. The concierge closed the window after him and fastened the blinds, which certainly could not have closed and fastened of themselves. That is the conclusion I have arrived at. If any one here has any

other idea let him state it."

M. Stangerson intervened: "What you say was impossible. I do not believe either in the guilt or in the connivance of my concierges, though I cannot understand what they were doing in the park at that late hour of the night. I say it was impossible, because Mme. Bernier held the lamp and did not move from the threshold of the room, because I as soon as the door was forced open threw myself on my knees beside my daughter, and no one could have left or entered the room by the door without passing over her body and forcing his way by me! Daddy Jacques and the conclerge had but to cast a glance around the chamber and under the bed, as I had done on entering, to see that there was nobody in it but

my daughter lying on the floor." "What do you think, M. Darzac?"

asked the magistrate. M. Darzac replied that he had no opinion to express.

M. Dax, the chief of police, who so far had been listening and examining the room, at length deigned to open his lips:

"While search is being made for the criminal we had better try to find out the motive for the crime. That will advance us a little," he said. Turning toward M. Stangerson, he continued in the even, intelligent tone indicative that mademoiselle was shortly to have been married?"

The professor looked sadly at M. Robert Darzac.

"With my friend here, whom I should have been happy to call my son -with M. Robert Darzac."

"Mile. Stangerson is much better and is rapidly recovering from her wounds. The marriage is simply delayed, is it not, monsieur?" insisted the chief of police. "I hope so."

"What! Is there any doubt about that?"

M. Stangerson did not answer. M Robert Darzac seemed agitated. I saw that his hand trembled as it fingered kis watch chain. M. Dax coughed, as did M. de Marquet. Both were evidently embarrassed.

"You understand, M. Stangerson," he said, "that in an affair so perplexing as this we cannot neglect anything. We must know all, even the smallest and seemingly most futile thing concerning the victim, information apparently the most insignificant. Why do you doubt that this marriage will take place? You expressed a hope, but the hope implies a doubt. Why do you

M. Stangerson made a visible effort to recover himself.

"Yes, monsieur," he said at length. "You are right. It will be best that you should know something which if I concealed it might appear to be of importance. M. Darzac agrees with me

M. Darzac, whose pallor at that moment seemed to me to be altogether abnormal, made a sign of assent. I gathered he was unable to speak.

"I want you to know, then," continued M. Stangerson, "that my daughter has sworn never to leave me and adheres firmly to her oath in spite of all my prayers and all that I have argued to induce her to marry. We have known M. Robert Darzae many years. He loves my child, and I believed that she loved him, because she only recently consented to this marriage, which I desire with all my heart. I am an old man, monsieur, and it was a happy hour to me when I knew that after I had gone she would have at her side one who loved her and who would help her in continuing our comlove and esteem M. Darzac both for his greatness of heart in charge of the pavilion, not to allow and for his devotion to science. But anybody to enter." two days before the tragedy, for I know not what reason, my daughter declared to me that she would never marry M. Darzac."

A dead silence followed M. Stangerson's words. It was a moment fraught with suspense.

"Did mademoiselle give you any explanation-did she tell you what her motive was?" asked M. Dax.

"She told me she was too old to marry; that she had waited too long. She said she had given much thought to the matter, and while she had a great esteem, even affection, for M. Darzac she felt it would be better if things remained as they were."

"That is very strange," muttered M.

"Strange!" repeated M. de Marquet. "You'll certainly not find the motive there, M. Dax," M. Stangerson said, with a cold smile.

"In any case, the motive was not theft," said the chief impatiently. "Oh, we are quite convinced

that!" exclaimed the examining magis-At that moment the door of the laboratory opened, and the officer in going through the vestibule and the charge of the gendarmes entered and handed a card to the examining magistrate. M. de Marquet read it and ut-

tered a half angry exclamation. "This is really too much!" he cried.

"What is it?" asked the chief. "It's the card of a young reporter engaged on the Epoque, a M. Joseph Rouletabille. It has these words written on it, "One of the motives of the crime was robbery."

The chief smiled. "Ah, young Rouletabille! I've heard of him. He is considered rather clever. Let him come in."

M. Joseph Rouletabille entered the laboratory, bowed to us and waited for M. de Marquet to ask him to explain his presence. "You pretend, monsieur, that you

know the motive for the crime and that that motive-in the face of all the evidence that has been forthcoming-was robbery?" "No, monsieur; I do not pretend that. Mile. Stangerso a about to enter the

I do not say that robbery was the motive for the crime, and I don't believe

"Then what is the meaning of this card?" "It means that robbery was one of

the motives for the crime.' "What leads you to think that?" "If you will be good enough to accompany me I will show you."

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him into the vestibule, and we did. He

led us toward the lavatory and begged

M. de Marquet to kneel beside him.

This lavatory is lit by the glass door,

and when the door was open the light

which penetrated was sufficient to

light it perfectly. M. de Marquet and

M. Joseph Rouletabille knelt down on

the threshold, and the young man

"The stones of the lavatory have not

been washed by Daddy Jacques for some time," he said. "That can be

seen by the layer of dust that covers

them. Now notice here the marks of

two large footprints and the black ash

they left where they have been. That

ash is nothing else than the charcoal

dust that covers the path along which

you must pass through the forest in

order to get directly from Epinay to

the Glandier. You know there is a

little village of charcoal burners at

that place who make large quantities

of charcoal. What the murderer did

was to come here at midday, when

there was nobody at the pavilion, and

"But what robbery? Where do you

see any signs of robbery? What proves

"What put me on the trace of it,"

"Was this," interrupted M. de Mar-

And M. de Marquet explained that

there were on the dust of the pave-

ment marks of two footsteps as well

as the impression, freshly made, of a

heavy rectangular parcel, the marks

of the cord with which it had been

"You have been here, then, M. Rou-

letabille? I thought I had given or-

ders to Daddy Jacques, who was left

"Don't scold Daddy Jacques. I came

"Ah, indeed!" exclaimed M. de Mar-

quet disagreeably, casting a side

"When I saw the mark of the parcel

by the side of the footprints I had no

doubt as to the robbery," replied M.

Rouletabille. "The thief had not

brought a parcel with him. He had

made one here-a parcel with the

stolen objects no doubt-and he put it

in this corner, intending to take it

away when the moment came for him

to make his escape. He had also

placed his heavy boots beside the par-

cel, for, see, there are no marks of

steps leading to the marks left by the

boots, which were placed side by side.

That accounts for the fact that the

rurderer left no trace of his steps

hen he fled from the yellow room

nor any in the laboratory, nor in the

vestibule. After entering the yellow

room in his boots he took them off.

finding them troublesome or because

possible. The marks made by him in

laboratory were subsequently washed

out by Daddy Jacques. Having for

some reason or other taken off his

boots, the murderer carried them in

his hand and placed them by the side

of the parcel be had made. By that

time the robbery had been accomplish-

ed. The man then returned to the

yellow room and slipped under the

bed, where the mark of his body is

perfectly visible on the floor and even

on the mat, which has been slightly

Fragments of straw also recently

torn bear witness to the murderer's

"Yes, yes. We know all about that."

"The robber had another motive for

returning to hide under the bed," con-

tinued the astonishing boy journalist.

"You might think that he was trying

to hide himself quickly on seeing,

through the vestibule window, M. and

pavilion. It would have been much

easier for him to bave climbed up to

the attic and hidden there, waiting

for an opportunity to get away, if his

purpose had been only flight. No, no:

He had to be in the yellow room."

Here the chief intervened.

movements under the bed."

sald M. de Marquet.

moved from its place and creased

he wished to make as little noise as

glance at M. Darzac, who remained

here with M. Robert Darzac.

perfectly silent.

fastened being easily distinguished.

"Evidently," said Rouletabille.

to you that a robbery has been com-

mitted?" we all cried at once.

continued the journalist.

quet, still on his knees.

attempt his robbery."

pointed to a spot on the pavement.

MRS. G. E. CHAMBERLAIN. *******



Wire of the newly elected senator from Oregon, who will figure in the tials committee through the efforts of Democrat, despite his indorsement by the Oregon voters at the primaries.

social world of Washington unless her husband is unseated by the credenthose who declare that a Republican legislature had no right to elect a

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how he came in and committed the robbery. But what did he steal?" "Something very valuable," replied the young reporter. At that moment we heard a cry from

the laboratory. We rushed in and found M. Stangerson, his eyes haggard, his limbs trembling, pointing to a sort of bookcase which he had opened and which we saw was empty. At the same instant he sank into the large armchair that was placed before the desk and grouned, the tears rolling down his cheeks: "I have been robbed again! For God's sake, do not say a word of this to my daughter! She would be more pained than I am." He heaved a deep sigh and added, in a tone I shall never forget, "After all, what does it matter-so long as she

"She will live," said M. Darzac in a voice strangely touching.

"And we will find the stolen articles," said M. Dax. "But what was in the cabinet?"

"Twenty years of my life," replied the illustrious professor sadly, "or, rather, of our lives-the lives of myself and my daughter. Yes, our most preclous documents, the records of our secret experiments and our labors of twenty years, were in that cabinet. It is an irreparable loss to us and, I venture to say, to science. All the processes by which I had been able to arrive at the precious proof of the destructibility of matter were there-all.

from me-my daughter and my work, my heart and my soul." And the great scientist wept like a

The man who came wished to take all

Rouletabille entered into explanations for which there was no need as been led to believe that a robbery had been committed, which included the simultaneous discovery he had made in the lavatory and the empty precious cabinet in the labora-

The first thing that had struck him, he said, was the unusual form of that piece of furniture. It was very strongly built of fire proof iron, clearly showing that it was intended for the keeping of most valuable objects. Then he noticed that the key had been left in the lock. "One does not ordinarily have a safe and leave it open!" be had said to himself.

This little key, with its brass head and complicated wards, had strongly attracted him-its presence had suggested robbery.

"You will do well, M. de Marquet, to ask M. Stangerson who usually kept that key," said Rouletabille. "My daughter," replied M. Stanger-

"She was never without it." "Ah, then that changes the aspect of things which no longer corresponds with M. Rouletabille's ideas!" cried M. de Marquet. "If that key never left Mile. Stangerson the murderer must have walted for her in her room for the purpose of stealing it, and the robbery could not have been committed until after the attack had been made on her. But after the attack four persons were in the laboratory! I can't make it out!"

"The robbery," said the reporter, "could only have been committed before the attack upon Mile. Stangerson in her room. When the murderer entered the pavilion he already possessed the brass headed key."

"That is impossible," said M. Stangerson in a low voice.

"It is quite possible, monsieur, as And the young man drew a copy of

the Epoque from his pocket dated the 21st of October (I recall the fact that Chamberlain's Cough Remedy the the crime was committed on the night between the 24th and 25th) and, showing us an advertisement, he read: "'Yesterday a black satin reticule

was lost in the Louvre department store. It contained, among other things, a small key with a brass head. A handsome reward will be given to the person who has found it. This person must write, poste restante, bureau 40, to this address: M. A. T. H. Do not these letters suggest Mile. Stangerson?" continued the reporter. "The key with a brass head," is not this the key? This advertise-"That's not at all bad, young man, | meht interested me specially; the wo-I compliment you. If we do not know man of the key surrounded it with a yet how the murderer succeeded in kind of mystery. Evidently she valued The young man asked us to follow getting away we can at any rate see the key since she promised a big re-

ward for its restoration. And I thought on these six letters; M. A. T. H. S. N. The first four at once pointed to a Christian name, evidently, I said, Math is Mathilde. But I could make nothing of the two last letters. So I threw the journal aside and occupied myself with other matters. Four days later when the evening paper appeared with enormous headline announcing the attack on Mile. Stangerson the letters in the advertisement mechanically recurred to me. I had forgotten the two last letters, S. N. When I saw them again I could not help exclaiming, 'Stangerson!' I jumped into a cab and rushed into the bureau No. 40 asking, 'Have you a letter addressed to M. A. T. H. S. N.? The clerk replied that he had not. I insisted, begged and entreated him to search. He wanted to know if I were playing a joke on him and then told me that he had had a letter with the initials M. A. T. H. S. N., but he had given it up three days ago to a lady who came for it. 'You come today to claim the letter, and the day before yesterday another gentleman claimed it. I've had enough of this,' he concluded angrily. I tried to question him as to the two persons who had already claimed the letter, but whether he wished to entrench himself behind professional secrecy-he may have thought that he had already said too much-or whether he was disgusted at the joke that had

swer any of my questions." "Then it is almost certain," said M. Stangerson, "that my daughter did lose the key, and that she did not tell me of it, wishing to spare any anxiety, and that she begged whoever had found it to write to the poste restante. She evidently feared that, by giving our address, inquiries would have resulted that would have apprised me of the loss of the key. It was quite logical, quite natural, for her to have taken that course-for I have been robbed once before."

been played on him he would not an-

"Where was that, and when?" asked the police chief.

"Oh, many years ago, in America, in Philadelphia. There were stolen from my laboratory the drawings of two inventions that might have made the fortune of a man. Not only have I never learned who the thief was, but I have never heard even a word of the object of the robbery, doubtless because in order to defeat the plans of the person who had robbed me I myself brought these two inventions before the public and so rendered the robbery of no avail. From that time on I have been very careful to shut myself in when I am at work. The bara to these windows, the lonely situation of this pavilion, this cabinet, which I had specially constructed, this special lock, this unique key, all are precautions against fears inspired by a sad experience."

"Most Interesting!" remarked M. M. Rouletabille asked about the reticule. Neither M. Stangerson nor Daddy Jacques had seen it for several days, but a few hours later we learned from Mile. Stangerson herself that the reticule had either been stolen from her or she had lost it. She further corroborated all that had passed just as her father had stated. She had gone to the poste restante and, on the 23d of October, had received a letter which, she affirmed, contained nothing but a vulgar pleasurery, which she had Immediately burned.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Most Popular Because It

is the Best. "I have sold Chamberlain s () gh centery for the past eight years al find it to be one of the best wall-

e nell ines on the mar hes and young children the is othing better in the line o mugh serous, says Paul Allen, Plai Dealis. This remedy not only cares the coughs, colds and croup so common among young children, but is pleasant and safe for them to take.

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