

The Mystery of The Yellow Room

By GASTON LEROUX

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CHAPTER II.

In Which Joseph Roulettable Appears For the First Time.

I FIRST knew Joseph Roulettable [pronounced Rule-ta-bee] when he was a young reporter. At that time I was a beginner at the bar and often met him in the corridors of examining magistrates when I had gone to get a "permit to communicate" for the prison of Mazas or for Saint-Lazare. He had, as they say, "a good nut." He seemed to have taken his head, round as a bullet, out of a box of marbles, and it is from that, I think, that his comrades of the press, all determined billiard players, had given him that nickname, which was to stick to him and be made illustrious by him. He was always as red as a tomato, now gay as a lark, now grave as a judge. How white still so young—he was only sixteen and a half years old when I saw him for the first time—had he already won his way on the press? That was what everybody who came into contact with him might have asked if they had not known his history. At the time of the affair of the woman cut in pieces in the Rue Oberkampf, another forgotten story, he had taken to one of the editors of the Epoque, a paper then rivaling the Matin for information, the left foot, which was missing from the basket in which the grewsome remains were discovered. For this left foot the police had been vainly searching for a week, and young Roulettable had found it in a drain where nobody had thought of looking for it. To do that he had dressed himself as an extra sewer man, one of a number engaged by the administration of the city of Paris owing to an overflow of the Seine.

When the editor in chief was in possession of the precious foot and informed as to the train of intelligent deductions the boy had been led to make he was divided between the admiration he felt for such detective cunning in a brain of a lad of sixteen years and delight at being able to exhibit in the "morgue window" of his paper the left foot of the Rue Oberkampf.

The boy faced reporter steadily made many friends, for he was serviceable and gifted with a good humor that enchanted the most severe tempered and disarmed the most zealous of his companions. He began to win a reputation as an unraveler of intricate and obscure affairs which found its way to the office of the chief of police. When a case was worth the trouble and Roulettable—he had already been given his nickname—had been started on the scent by his editor in chief he often got the better of the most famous detectives.

It was at the Bar cafe that I became intimately acquainted with him. Criminal lawyers and journalists are not enemies; the former need advertisement, the latter information. We chatted together, and I soon warmed toward him—his intelligence was so keen and so original, and he had a quality of thought such as I have never found in any other person.

Nearly two years passed in this way, and the better I knew him the more I learned to love him, for in spite of his careless extravagance I had discovered in him what was, considering his age, an extraordinary seriousness of mind. Accustomed as I was to seeing him gay, and, indeed, often too gay, I would many times find him pensive in the deepest melancholy. I tried then to question him as to the cause of this change of humor, but each time he laughed and made me no answer. One day, having questioned him about his parents, of whom he never spoke, he left me, pretending not to have heard what I said.

While things were in this state between us the famous case of "the yellow room" took place. It was this case which was to rank him as the leading newspaper reporter and to obtain for him the reputation of being the greatest detective in the world.

Roulettable entered my room on the morning of the 29th of October, 1892. He was looking redder than usual, and his eyes were bulging out of his head, as the phrase is, and altogether he appeared to be in a state of extreme excitement. He waved the Matin with a trembling hand and cried:

"Well, my dear Sainclair, have you read it?"

"The Glandier crime?"

"Yes: 'the yellow room'! What do you think of it?"

"I think that it must have been the devil or 'the Bete du Bon Dieu' that committed the crime."

"Be serious!"

"Well, I don't much believe in murderers who make their escape through walls of solid brick. I think Daddy Jacques did wrong to leave behind him the weapon with which the crime was committed, and, as he occupied the attic immediately above Mlle. Stangerson's room, the builder's job ordered by the examining magistrate will give us the key of the enigma, and it will not be long before we learn by what natural trap or by what secret door the old fellow was able to slip in and out and return immediately to the laboratory

to M. Stangerson without his absence being noticed. That, of course, is only an hypothesis."

Roulettable sat down in an armchair, lit his pipe, which he was never without, smoked for a few minutes in silence—no doubt to calm the excitement which visibly dominated him—and then replied:

"No trap will be found, and the mystery of the yellow room will become more and more mysterious. That's why it interests me. The examining magistrate is right. Nothing stranger than this crime has ever been known."

"Have you any idea of the way by which the murderer escaped?" I asked.

"None," replied Roulettable, "none, for the present. But I have an idea as to the revolver. The murderer did not use it."

"Good heavens! By whom, then, was it used?"

"Why, by Mlle. Stangerson."

"I don't understand, or, rather, I have never understood," I said.

Roulettable shrugged his shoulders.

"Is there nothing in this article in the Matin by which you were particularly struck?"

"Nothing. I have found the whole of the story it tells equally strange."

"Well, but—the locked door—with the key on the inside?"

"That's the only perfectly natural thing in the whole article."

"Really! And the bolt?"

"The bolt?"

"Yes, the bolt, also inside the room, a still further protection against entry. Mlle. Stangerson took quite extraordinary precautions. It is clear to me that she feared some one. That was why she took such precautions—even Daddy Jacques' revolver—without telling him of it. No doubt she didn't wish to alarm anybody and, least of all, her father. What she dreaded took place, and she defended herself. There was a struggle, and she used the revolver skillfully enough to wound the assassin in the hand, which explains the impression on the wall and on the door of the large, blood stained hand of the man who was searching for a means of exit from the chamber. But she didn't fire soon enough to avoid the terrible blow on the right temple."

"Then the wound on the temple was not done with the revolver?"

"The paper doesn't say it was, and I don't think it was, because logically it appears to me that the revolver was used by Mlle. Stangerson against the assassin. Now, what weapon did the murderer use? The blow on the temple seems to show that the murderer wished to stun Mlle. Stangerson after he had unsuccessfully tried to strangle her. He must have known that the attic was inhabited by Daddy Jacques and that was one of the reasons, I think, why he must have used a quiet weapon—a life preserver or a hammer."

"All that doesn't explain how the murderer got out of the yellow room," I observed.

"Evidently," replied Roulettable, rising, "and that is what has to be explained. I am going to the Chateau du Glandier and have come to see whether you will go with me."

"I?"

"Yes, my boy, I want you. The Epoque has definitely entrusted this case to me, and I must clear it up as quickly as possible."

"But in what way can I be of any use to you?"

"M. Robert Darzac is at the Chateau du Glandier."

"That's true. His despair must be boundless."

"I must have a talk with him."

I knew M. Robert Darzac from having been of great service to him in a civil action while I was acting as secretary to Maitre Barbet Delator. M. Robert Darzac, who was at that time about forty years of age, was a professor of physics at the Sorbonne. He was intimately acquainted with the Stangersons and after an assiduous seven years' courtship of the daughter had been on the point of marrying her. In spite of the fact that she had become, as the phrase goes, "a person of a certain age," she was still remarkably good looking.

While I was dressing I called out to Roulettable, who was impatiently moving about my sitting room:

"Have you any idea as to the murderer's station in life?"

"Yes," he replied. "I think if he isn't a man in society, he is at least a man belonging to the upper class. But that, again, is only an impression."

"What has led you to form it?"

"Well, the greasy cap, the common handkerchief and the marks of the rough boots on the floor," he replied.

"I understand," I said. "Murderers don't leave traces behind them which tell the truth."

"We shall make something out of you yet, my dear Sainclair," concluded Roulettable.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Selfish Lad.
Mother (reading telegram)—Henry telegraphs that the football match is over, and he came out of it with three broken ribs.
Father (eagerly)—And who won?
Mother—He doesn't say.
Father (impatiently)—Confound it all! That boy never thinks of anybody but himself. Now I must wait until I get the paper tomorrow morning.—London Tit-Bits.

Knew the Business.
"Children, children! Don't make such a frightful noise," said the distracted mother.
"We're playing omnibus, mamma," said Mattie soberly.
"Yes, I know, dear, but it isn't really necessary to make such a terrible noise."
"Yes, it is, mamma. We've got to where Mattie insists on paying the fare and so do I."—London Fun.

The Scrap Book

The Tables Turned.
The amenities of political campaigning are amusingly illustrated by a story told by a southern congressman.

It appears that during the course of a stump speech delivered some years ago by John Sharp Williams in Mississippi he was interrupted by a sudden yell from a man in the audience:

"I have been robbed by pickpockets!"

"I did not know that there were any Republicans present," promptly suggested Mr. Williams in order to get a laugh.

"Oh, there ain't there ain't!" roared the unhappy man. "I'm the only one!"—Lippincott's.

FREEDOM FOR THE MIND.
High walls and huge the body may confine
And iron grates obstruct the prisoner's gaze.
And massive bolts may baffle his design
And vigilant keepers watch his devious ways.
Yet scorns the mortal mind this base control!
No chains can bind it and no cell inclose.
Swifter than light, it flies from pole to pole,
And in a flash from earth to heaven it goes.
It leaps from mount to mount, from vale to vale
It wanders, plucking honeyed fruits and flowers.
It visits home to hear the fireside tale
Or in sweet converse pass the joyous hours.
'Tis up before the sun, roaming afar,
And in its watches wears every star.
—William Lloyd Garrison.

A Caustic Cut.
"I overheard this dialogue," said a congressman, "at a reception that I once attended in Washington. The speakers were two grandes dames—I believe that is the word—two powerful social leaders, one from Philadelphia, the other from New York."

"Well," said the first grande dame, "I must be off. I've got to go and see my mother."

"The second put up her lorgnette and drawled:

"Really—at you don't mean to say you've got a mother living?"

"The first grande dame laughed—a high, thin laugh, with something biting like acid in it.

"Oh, yes," she said. "My mother is still alive—and she doesn't look a day older than you do, I assure you."

Carl Schurz and Eugene Field.
When Carl Schurz was campaigning through Missouri, Eugene Field, as a reporter for a St. Louis newspaper, accompanied him to report the meetings. One night they came to a small town where Mr. Schurz was to speak. The hall was packed with an expectant crowd, but the presiding officer who was to have introduced Mr. Schurz did not appear. Finally Mr. Schurz suggested quietly to Field that he should fill in the part and introduce him to the audience. Field acquiesced readily enough. Advancing to the front of the platform, his hand pressed to his throat, he said, with a splendid German dialect: "Ladies und gentlemen, I haf contracted such a very severe cold that it is impossible for me to speak tonight, but I haf to introduce the great journalist, Eugene Field, to take my place. I am sure that you will be blessed and benefited by the change."

Mr. Schurz nearly had a stroke of apoplexy, and it took him some time to explain the situation.

Three Times and Out.
Professor John Stuart Blackie of Edinburgh, being suddenly called away one day, posted this notice on his class room door for his students:

"Professor Blackie will be unable to meet his classes today."
Some waggish student came along and rubbed out the "e" from the word classes. The professor, reaching home that evening, saw the erasure and promptly erased the letter "l."

Wouldn't Take Chances.
A prominent New York physician was sent for by a rich but avaricious man who in some way had dislocated his jaw. The young surgeon promptly put the member in place, and the man was profuse in his thanks. Then he asked carelessly:

"What is your bill, doctor?"

"Fifty dollars, sir," was the answer.

"What!" cried the man, and in saying it he opened his mouth so wide as to dislocate his jaw a second time. The surgeon again put things to rights.

"What did you say your bill was?" again asked the patient.

"I said it was \$50," replied the doctor, "but now it is \$100!"

The man started to open his mouth again, but thought better of it and paid the bill without a word.

The Good.
He who wishes to exert a useful influence must be careful to insult nothing. Let him not be troubled by what seems absurd, but let him consecrate his energies to the creation of what is good. He must not demolish, but build. He must raise temples where mankind may come and partake of the purest pleasures.—Goethe.

A Mountain of Sulphur.
The Soufriere, or sulphurous mountain, is considered to be the greatest natural curiosity of St. Lucia, and, in fact, of the West Indies. It is situated about half an hour's ride from the town of Soufriere, to which it has given its name, and nearly two miles to the east of the Pitons, and is at the foot of two small hills, both of which are quite bare of vegetation on the sides facing the crater. It covers a space of about three acres and is crust-

ed over with sulphur and alum. There are several caldrons in a perpetual state of ebullition. The water is quite black in the larger ones, but in the smaller ones it is quite clear. Visitors never fail to boil some eggs in one of the smaller caldrons, obtaining them from one of the creole guides, who keeps a supply on hand for that purpose.

Necessity, Not Choice.
A young man engaged board in a private family who were extremely devout. Before each meal grace was said. To their dismay the new boarder sat bolt upright while the others reverently bowed their heads. When the second day passed and the young man evinced no disposition to unbend, the good lady of the house could endure the situation no longer.

"Atheism?" asked she sharply.

"No, madam," humbly responded the boarder—"boil."

An Anachronism.
A curious old copper plate engraving shows "Mrs. Hartley in the Character of Cleopatra." The actress wears a hooped petticoat, over which is a panner skirt with a long train and ornamented with loops of artificial roses. The stiffest of corsets imprisons the waist, while her head is graced with an earl's coronet, and from this imposing ornament streams an ostrich plume.

Tambo—Say, Mistab Bones, what s'm de three most uncertalnest things in de world?

Bones—Ah dunno, Mistab Tambo. What am de three most uncertalnest things in de world?

Bones—A woman an' two other women.—Chicago News.

"I doubt ye are growing remiss, John," said a Scotch parish minister. "I have not seen you in the kirk these three Sabbaths."

John was not duly abashed. "Na," said he. "It's no but that I'm growing remiss. I'm just tinkerin' awa wi' ma soul mazel."—London News.

"What are you going out before the curtain again for?" demanded the stage manager, clutching the arm of the new vaudeville artist, who had just made a dismal failure.

"Somebody's clapped," blurted the actor, "and I want to find out who it was."

"I told her that I admired her for her noble qualities of heart and mind, for her intellect and a lot more off the same reel."

"I dunno. I think the best plan is to tell 'em they're pretty."—Washington Herald.

Hiram—Was yer house damaged by that there cyclone?

Ike—Dunno. I hain't found it yet.—Cleveland Leader.

Howell—If I hadn't drawn that queen I might have had a straight flush. Powell—That's right; always blame the woman!—Chicago News.

"They say that Cholly has lost his mind."

"Is that so? Does he know it?"—Boston Courier.

Madge—What is the object of hazing in college? Marjorie—I guess it's to teach the boys brutality for use in the football games.—Puck.

"Does your husband forget to mail the letters you give him?"

"Never. I put them in his cigar case."—Cleveland Leader.

"I came in to see if I can get some fire insurance."

"On your home?"

"No, on my job."—Houston Post.

He (at the opera)—Just going out for a little fresh air, my dear. She—A slight draft, you mean, I suppose.—London Punch.

Jennie—She puts lots of feeling in her singing, doesn't she?

James—Yes, but it must be awful to feel that way.—Tatler.

The largest hanging bell in the world is near Canton, China. It is eighteen feet high and forty-five feet in circumference at the bottom.

Shakespeare, among his many allusions to the sweetness, the innocence and the helplessness of the lamb, only once cites it as an article of food.

If any member of the family is very sick at the stomach beat up the white of an egg and let him swallow it. It acts like a charm.

A solution of an ounce of saltpeter in ten of sulphuric acid will remove the silver from plated goods without affecting the other metal.

Wife—My father always used to say it was a pity I wasn't born a boy. Husband—I think so too.—London Mail.

Atmospheric electricity is believed to encourage plant life in the arctic regions, where there is but little sunlight.

In Spain boys under sixteen are not allowed to lift or carry more than sixteen pounds or push or draw heavy loads.

Bathing machines, used almost exclusively on the English coast, were invented in 1750, but were not used extensively until 1803.

Mother—Tottie, you must be generous with your candy. Pass it around. Tottie (to guest)—Take all you want. Take two.—Life.

Man—Do you believe that story about her? Woman—I'd believe anything about her unless she told it to me herself.—London Pick-Me-Up.

Freddie—The dentist tells me—aw—that I have a large cavity which needs filling. Madge—What course of study did he suggest for this purpose?

Washington Celebrities

The Career of Philander Chase Knox, Who Will Be Taft's Secretary of State—His Family

New German Ambassador, Count von Bernstorff, Senator Carter's Popularity With Cartoonists

THE choice of Senator Philander Chase Knox as secretary of state in the cabinet of President Elect Taft is notable as an honor bestowed by a successful candidate for presidential honors upon



AN UNSUCCESSFUL RIVAL. Senator Knox was an open and avowed candidate for the nomination which Judge Taft obtained, but his ambition did not result in creating any ill feeling between the two men. The Pennsylvania senator has rendered cabinet service before as attorney general in the second McKinley administration and during part of President Roosevelt's first term, and he did not seek the post of secretary of state, preferring, it is said, to hold his seat in the senate. But Judge Taft's strong feeling in the matter impelled him to accept the proffered post. In becoming head of the cabinet he will not only administer the foreign affairs of the government, but will be able to give the next president the benefit of his counsel in many matters pertaining to internal administration respecting which his knowledge of the law, the constitution and the legislative branch of the government will be valuable. Senator Knox was born fifty-five years ago in the town of Brownsville,

children, a son of twenty and a daughter, Alexandra, who is seventeen. The count, who is forty-six years old, began his diplomatic career in 1888, when he was made attache at Constantinople. From Turkey he was transferred to the German foreign office, after which he advanced from one grade to another, serving as a representative in many of the great capitals of Europe.

He was counselor of the German embassy and first secretary in London six years ago.

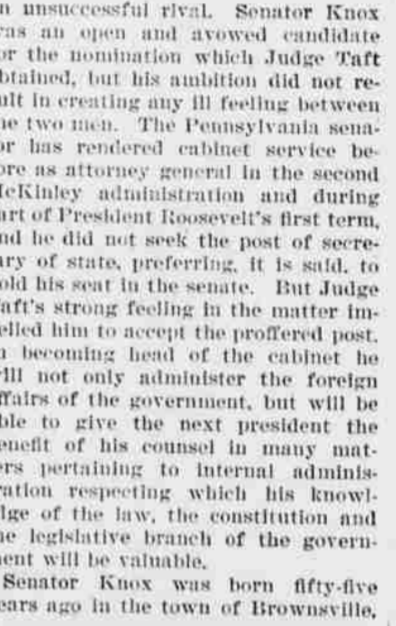
The count's work in creating good feeling between Great Britain and

Germany brought him for the first time under the notice of the emperor, and after four years' service in a minor position in London he was transferred to Cairo as ambassador. This position is regarded in the German diplomatic service as a stepping stone to one of the greater ambassadorial portfolios, and his present appointment, therefore, did not cause much surprise in Berlin.

President Elect Taft's possible patronage will amount to more than 8,700 offices, including only those classed as "presidential." This army, composed solely of officials, equals the combined force of officers, clerks and other subordinates drawing government salaries under President Monroe. These "presidential" offices have more than doubled since Cleveland first entered the White House. Since then two new departments have been added, also many new bureaus and such great undertakings as the digging of the Panama canal and the administration of insular possessions.

Mr. Taft cannot independently appoint these officials. He merely can nominate them. Under the first article of the constitution senators are part of the appointing power, and an appointment to a "presidential" office under Mr. Taft will represent an agreement between him and the upper house of congress. Appointees of this class will not receive their commissions until "confirmed" by that body.

Senator Thomas H. Carter of Montana is a good subject for the cartoonist because of the long whiskers he sports, a possession the like of which is not often found nowadays in legislative halls at Washington. The sena-



PHOTOGRAPH BY CLIBBINGST WASHINGTON DC



MRS. KNOX AND GRANDSON.

Pa. At nineteen he was graduated at Mount Union college, Alliance, O., and while at this institution formed the acquaintance with William McKinley which was to have such an important effect later on upon his career. He entered a bank after leaving college and there earned enough money to pursue study to fit him for practice at the bar. In 1880 he married Miss Lillie Smith, daughter of Andrew D. Smith, a pioneer iron manufacturer of Pittsburgh. For a short time he was an assistant United States district attorney, but about thirty years ago he entered a partnership for the practice of law and continued in these relations until Mr. McKinley invited him to head the department of justice in his cabinet in 1901.

Some most important suits against trusts and other big corporations were instituted in the following three years, notably that against the Northern Securities company, and Mr. Knox made a remarkable record in the conduct of these proceedings. He succeeded the late M. S. Quay in the senate in 1904 by appointment of Governor Pennypacker and was subsequently elected to that body by the Pennsylvania legislature for the term expiring in 1911. He has accumulated a fortune in the practice of law and has several beautiful homes, one being an estate of 300 acres at Valley Forge, Pa. The family spend as much of their time as possible at this country seat. Mrs. Knox is a woman of many accomplishments and social graces, and her daughter Rebekah, who married James R. Tindie of Pittsburgh four years ago, was quite popular before her marriage in Washington society. There are several sons in the family, and a recent arrival is a little grandson.

The new German ambassador to Washington, Count Johann Heinrich von Bernstorff, has an American wife. She was Miss Jeanne Luckemeyer and met the count while traveling in Europe in 1887. The couple have two



THOMAS H. CARTER AND A CARICATURE OF HIM.

tor resembles a New England deacon of the type now famous in song and story. He has been a big gun in his party in days gone by and was chairman of its national committee when Benjamin Harrison ran for re-election as president.

How He Found Out.
"I never bet on a horse race."
"But this is a sure thing."
"It was betting on a sure thing that cured me."