

The Mystery of The Yellow Room

By GASTON LEROUX

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CHAPTER VII.

In Which Roulettable Sets Out on an Expedition Under the Bed.

ROULETTABLE, having pushed open the door of the yellow room, paused on the threshold. The chamber was dark. Daddy Jacques was about to open the blinds when Roulettable stopped him. "Did not the tragedy take place in complete darkness?" he asked.

"No, young man; I don't think so. Mademoiselle always had a light light on her table, and I lit it every evening before she went to bed. I was a sort of chambermaid, you must understand, when the evening came. The real chambermaid did not come here much before the morning. Mademoiselle worked late—far into the night."

"Where did the table with the light stand—far from the bed?" "Some way from the bed."

"Can you light the burner now?" "The lamp is broken and the oil that was in it was spilled when the table was upset. All the rest of the things in the room remain just as they were. I have only to open the blinds for you to see."

"Wait." Roulettable went back into the laboratory, closed the shutters of the two windows and the door of the vestibule. When he was in complete darkness he lit a wax vesta and asked Daddy Jacques to move to the middle of the chamber with it to the place where the night light was burning that night.

Daddy Jacques, who was in his stockings—he usually left his sabots in the vestibule—entered the yellow room with his bit of a vesta. We vaguely distinguished objects overthrown on the floor, a bed in one corner and in front of us to the left the gleam of a looking glass hanging on the wall near to the bed.

"That will do. You may now open the blinds," said Roulettable. "Don't come any farther! Daddy Jacques begged. "You may make marks with your boots, and nothing must be deranged. It's an idea of the magistrate's, though he has nothing more to do here."

And he pushed open the shutter. The pale daylight entered from without, throwing a sinister light on the saffron colored walls. The floor—through the laboratory and the vestibule were tiled the yellow room had a flooring of wood—was covered with a single yellow mat which was large enough to cover nearly the whole room, under the bed and under the dressing table, the only piece of furniture that remained upright. The center round table, the night table and two chairs had been overturned. These did not prevent a large stain of blood being visible on the mat, made, as Daddy Jacques informed us, by the blood which had flowed from the wound on Mlle. Stangerson's forehead. Besides these stains drops of blood had fallen in all directions, in line with the visible traces of the footsteps, large and black, of the murderer. Everything led to the presumption that these drops of blood had fallen from the wound of the man who had for a moment placed his red hand on the wall. There were other traces of the same hand on the wall, but much less distinct.

"See—see this blood on the wall!" I could not help exclaiming. "The man who pressed his hand so heavily upon it in the darkness must certainly have thought that he was pushing at a door. That's why he pressed on it so hard, leaving on the yellow paper the terrible evidence. I don't think there are many hands in the world of that sort. It is big and strong, and the fingers are nearly all one as long as the other. The thumb is wanting, and we have only the mark of the palm, but if we follow the trace of the hand," I continued, "we see that after leaving its imprint on the wall the touch sought the door, found it and then felt for the lock."

"No doubt," interrupted Roulettable, chuckling, "only there is no blood either on the lock or on the bolt." "What does that prove?" I rejoined, with a good sense of which I was proud. "He might have opened the lock with his left hand, which would have been quite natural, his right hand being wounded."

"He didn't open it at all," Daddy Jacques again exclaimed. "We are not fools, and there were four of us when we burst open the door." "What a queer hand! Look what a queer hand it is!" I said.

"It is a very natural hand," said Roulettable, "of which the shape has been deformed by its having slipped on the wall. The man dried his hand on the wall. He must be a man about five feet eight in height."

"How do you come at that?" "By the height of the marks on the wall." My friend next occupied himself with the mark of the bullet in the wall. It was a round hole.

"This ball was fired straight, not from above, and consequently not

from below." Roulettable went back to the door and carefully examined the lock and the bolt, satisfying himself that the door had certainly been burst open from the outside, and, further, that the key had been found in the lock on the inside of the chamber. He finally satisfied himself that with the key in the lock the door could not possibly be opened from without with another key. Having made sure of all these details, he let fall these words, "That's better!" Then, sitting down on the ground, he hastily took off his boots and in his socks went into the room.

The first thing he did was to examine minutely the overturned furniture. We watched him in silence. "Young fellow, you are giving yourself a great deal of trouble," said Daddy Jacques ironically.

Roulettable raised his head and said: "You have spoken the simple truth, Daddy Jacques. Your mistress did not have her hair in bands that evening. I was a donkey to have believed she did."

Then, with the suppleness of a serpent, he slipped under the bed. Presently we heard him ask:

"At what time, M. Jacques, did M. and Mlle. Stangerson arrive at the laboratory?" "At 6 o'clock."

The voice of Roulettable continued: "Yes, he's been under here, that's certain. In fact, there was nowhere else where he could have hidden himself. Here, too, are the marks of his hobnails. When you entered, all four of you, did you look under the bed?" "At once. We drew it right out of its place."

"And between the mattresses?" "There was only one on the bed, and on that mademoiselle was placed, and M. Stangerson and the concierge immediately carried it into the laboratory. Under the mattress there was nothing but the metal netting, which could not conceal anything or anybody. Remember, monsieur, that there were four of us, and we couldn't fail to see everything, the chamber is so small and scantily furnished, and all was locked behind in the pavilion."

I ventured on a hypothesis: "Perhaps he got away with the mattress—in the mattress! Anything is possible in the face of such a mystery. In their distress of mind M. Stangerson and the concierge may not have noticed they were bearing a double weight, especially if the concierge were an accomplice. I throw out this hypothesis for what it is worth, but it explains many things and particularly the fact that neither the laboratory nor the vestibule bears any traces of the footmarks found in the room. If in carrying mademoiselle on the mattress for a moment there might have been an opportunity for the man in it to escape."

"And then?" asked Roulettable, deliberately laughing under the bed. I felt rather vexed and replied: "I don't know, but anything appears possible."

"The examining magistrate had the same idea, monsieur," said Daddy Jacques, "and he carefully examined the mattress. He was obliged to laugh at the idea, monsieur, as your friend is doing now, for whoever heard of a mattress having a double bottom?" My friend alone seemed able to talk intelligently. He called out from under the bed:

"The mat here has been moved out of place. Who did it?" "We did, monsieur," explained Daddy Jacques. "When we could not find the assassin we asked ourselves whether there was not some hole in the floor."

"There is not," replied Roulettable. "Is there a cellar?" "No, there's no cellar. But that has not stopped our searching and has not prevented the examining magistrate and his registrar from studying the floor plank by plank, as if there had been a cellar under it."

The reporter then reappeared. His eyes were sparkling and his nostrils quivered. Thus he made his way to the four corners of the room, so to speak, sniffing and going around everything—everything that we could see, which was not much, and everything that we could not see, which must have been infinite.

The toilet table was a simple table standing on four legs. There was nothing about it by which it could possibly be changed into a temporary hiding place. There was not a closet or cupboard. Mlle. Stangerson kept her wardrobe at the chateau.

Roulettable literally passed his nose and hands along the walls, constructed of solid brickwork. When he had finished with the walls and passed his agile fingers over every portion of the yellow paper covering them he reached to the ceiling, which he was able to touch by mounting on a chair placed on the toilet table, and by moving this ingeniously constructed stage from place to place he examined every foot of it. When he had finished his scrutiny of the ceiling, where he carefully examined the hole made by the second bullet, he approached the

window and once more examined the iron bars and blinds, all of which were solid and intact. At last he gave a grunt of satisfaction and declared, "Now I am at ease!"

"Well, do you believe that the poor dear young lady was shut up when she was being murdered—when she cried out for help?" wailed Daddy Jacques.

"Yes," said the young reporter, drying his forehead; "the yellow room was as tightly shut as an iron safe." "The Bete du Bon Dieu," muttered Daddy Jacques—"the Bete du Bon Dieu herself, if she had committed the crime, could not have escaped. Listen! Do you hear it? Hush!"

Daddy Jacques made us a sign to keep quiet and, stretching his arm toward the wall nearest the forest, listened to something which we could not hear.

"It's answering," he said at length. "I must kill it. It is too wicked, but it's the Bete du Bon Dieu, and every night it goes to pray on the tomb of St. Genevieve, and nobody dares to touch her for fear that Mother Angenoux should cast an evil spell on them."

"How big is the Bete du Bon Dieu?" "Nearly as big as a small retriever—a monster, I tell you. Ah, I have asked myself more than once whether it was not she that took our poor mademoiselle by the throat with her claws. But the Bete du Bon Dieu does not wear hobnailed boots, nor fire revolvers, nor has she a hand like that!" exclaimed Daddy Jacques, again pointing out to us the red mark on the wall.

"Besides, we should have seen her as well as we would have seen a man." "Evidently," I said. "Before we had seen this yellow room I had also asked myself whether the cat of Mother Angenoux—"

"You also?" cried Roulettable. "Didn't you?" I asked. "Not for a moment. After reading the article in the *Matin* I knew that a cat had nothing to do with the matter. But I swear now that a frightful tragedy has been enacted here. You say nothing about the Basque cap or the handkerchief found here, Daddy Jacques."

"Of course the magistrate has taken them," the old man answered hesitatingly. "I haven't seen either the handkerchief or the cap, yet I can tell you how they are made," the reporter said to him gravely.

"Oh, you are very clever," said Daddy Jacques, coughing and embarrassed. "The handkerchief is a large one, blue with red stripes, and the cap is an old Basque cap, like the one you are wearing now."

"You are a wizard!" said Daddy Jacques, trying to laugh and not quite succeeding. "How do you know that the handkerchief is blue with red stripes?" "Because if it had not been blue with red stripes it would not have been found at all."

Without giving any further attention to Daddy Jacques my friend took a piece of paper from his pocket and, taking out a pair of scissors, bent over the footprints. Placing the paper over one of them, he began to cut. In a short time he had made a perfect pattern, which he handed to me, begging me not to lose it.

He then returned to the window and, pointing to the figure of Frederic Larsan, who had not quitted the side of the lake, asked Daddy Jacques whether the detective had, like himself, been working in the yellow room.

"No," replied Robert Darzac, who since Roulettable had handed him the piece of scorching paper had not uttered a word. "He pretends that he does not need to examine the yellow room. He says that the murderer made his escape from it in quite a natural way and that he will this evening explain how he did it."

As he listened to what M. Darzac had to say Roulettable turned pale. "Has Frederic Larsan found out the truth, which I can only guess at?" he murmured. "He is very clever—very clever—and I admire him. Yet I have discovered many things."

"Moral or material?" I asked. "Several moral, one material. This, for example." And rapidly he drew from his waistcoat pocket a piece of paper in which he had placed a light colored hair from a woman's head.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I—A mysterious attempt is made at midnight to murder Mlle. Stangerson, daughter and assistant of Prof. Stangerson, who is at work on his theory of the dissociation of matter in a pavilion near his chateau. Pistol shots and the young woman's cries for help are heard behind the locked and bolted door of her chamber, the yellow room. The cries are answered by Professor Stangerson and Daddy Jacques, an aged servant, aided by the concierges, Bernier and his wife, they break open

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list the corporation which occupies the position of plaintiff in the proceedings. The appeal was taken from Judge Wright's court to the court of appeals



JUDGE DANIEL THEW WRIGHT.

of the District of Columbia, and the labor leaders were released on bonds.

Judge Wright was appointed to his present post by President Roosevelt in 1903. He was born in Cincinnati in 1864 and comes of a family of lawyers and jurists. After graduating from high school and the Cincinnati Law school he began the practice of law and held several minor public posts. He was chosen a judge of the court of common pleas of Hamilton county, O., in 1893. During his practice before the bar he made several fights for the protection of labor interests.

Mr. Gompers, who was sentenced by Judge Wright to a term of one year in jail, will be fifty-nine years of age on the 27th of January and has been connected with efforts to organize working people since his fifteenth year. He was born in England and is a cigar maker by trade. In fact, he can roll a pretty good cigar now. He was one of the founders of the Federation of Labor and with an intermission of one year has been its president since 1882.

Mr. Mitchell, who was sentenced to nine months' imprisonment, retired but recently as president of the United Mine Workers of America on account of ill health. He has always been counted a close friend of President Roosevelt, and it was supposed that the latter would desire especially to modify the action of the court in his case if the opportunity presented and he could consistently do so. But Mr. Roosevelt has stated that as the matter stands the case is not before him in any official way and is not likely to be. Mr. Mitchell, who was at the head of the United Mine Workers for nearly a decade, has been regarded as a labor leader of a conservative type. Born in Illinois in 1870, he worked in coal mines before he was a dozen years old and joined the Knights of Labor when he was fifteen. He obtained quite a fair education through night study and reading, studied law and has written on economic questions.

Frank Morrison, secretary of the American Federation of Labor, was sentenced by Judge Wright to a term of six months. Mr. Morrison is forty-one years old and was for years one of the most active members of Chicago Typographical union, No. 16. He represented the printers in the Chicago Federation of Labor and in 1896 was a delegate to the international union convention at Colorado Springs, which chose him as one of its delegates to the Federation of Labor. He was elected secretary of the latter body at the succeeding meeting.

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THE KING OF ITALY.

He Knows How to Act in Face of Earthquakes and Eruptions.

King Victor Emmanuel of Italy is very popular with his subjects, and his popularity is in part due to the way in which he exerts himself whenever there is any great calamity like that of the recent earthquake in Sicily and Calabria. During the last eruption of Vesuvius, when 500 people were supposed to have lost their lives, he was very energetic in devising means for the public safety or for succoring the victims of the disaster. The king even went into places of danger himself in his eagerness to see that everything possible was being done in behalf of his afflicted subjects. At the time of the recent earthquake shocks the Italian monarch was hunting in a district near Naples. He at once issued orders that preparations be made for a trip to Calabria, which is in southern Italy



KING VICTOR EMMANUEL.

and with Sicily forms the center of the earthquake district. Between the earthquake of 1905 in this district, which destroyed thirty towns and cost about 3,000 lives, and the eruption of Vesuvius in the spring of 1906, the southern portion of King Victor Emmanuel's realm has in recent years been very much ill treated by the forces of nature.

THE STEINHEIL CASE.

M. Steinheil and the House in Paris in Which He Lived.

The strange case of Mme. Steinheil continues to excite the interest of Paris. The woman who had so many intrigues with famous men of France



M. STEINHEIL AND HOUSE HE LIVED IN.

has retained to an unusual degree in a person of her age her remarkable beauty, and her daughter is also a handsome woman. This fact is not lost upon the French public, susceptible as it is to the romantic features of a case. The house in which M. Steinheil lived and in which he was murdered has naturally figured a good deal in the proceedings. The Parisians have studied carefully the descriptions in the newspapers of the location of his apartments, of those of his wife and her mother, Mme. Japy, numbered in the cut 1, 2 and 3 respectively.

Stomach Trouble Cured.

If you have any trouble with your stomach you should take Chamberlain's Stomach and Liver Tablets. Mr. J. P. Klotz of Edina, Mo., says: "I have used a great many different medicines for stomach trouble, but find Chamberlain's Stomach and Liver Tablets more beneficial than any other remedy I ever used." For sale by Burroughs & Mayfield.

The Gompers Labor Case.

Samuel Gompers.

It seems likely that a conspicuous place in the annals of legal proceedings will be given the case of the Buck Stove and Range company of St. Louis against Samuel Gompers and other officials of the American Federation of Labor. At any rate, not in a long time has a court order produced such a profound sensation throughout the country as that of Judge Daniel Thew Wright of the supreme court of the District of Columbia in sentencing to imprisonment the president, vice president and secretary of the American Federation of Labor. These three posts are held respectively by Samuel Gompers, John Mitchell and Frank Morrison, all men of high reputation as citizens and widely known and esteemed in the world of labor.

JOHN MITCHELL.

FRANK MORRISON.

Sentence was imposed on the three labor men in consequence of their alleged contempt of court in violating the order enjoining them from placing on the "unfair" or "We don't patronize" list of the American Federation-