

# The Mystery of The Yellow Room

By GASTON LEROUX

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## CHAPTER XXV.

In Which Joseph Rouletabille Is Awaited With Impatience.

ON the 15th of January—that is to say, two months and a half after the tragic events I have narrated—the Epoque printed as the first column of the front page the following sensational article:

"The Seine-et-Oise jury is summoned today to give its verdict on one of the most mysterious affairs in the annals of crime. There never has been a case with so many obscure, inexplicable, and inexplicable points. And yet the prosecution has not hesitated to put into the prisoners' dock a man who is respected, esteemed and loved by all who knew him—a young savant, M. Robert Darzac. There is no doubt in the mind of anybody that could the victim speak she would claim from the jurors of Seine-et-Oise the man she wishes to make her husband and whom the prosecution would send to the scaffold. It is to be hoped that Mlle. Stangerson will shortly recover her reason, which has been temporarily unhinged by the horrible mystery at the Glandier. The question before the jury is the one we propose to deal with this very day.

"We have decided not to permit twelve worthy men to commit a disgraceful miscarriage of justice. Up to now everything has gone against M. Robert Darzac in the magisterial inquiry. Today, however, we are going to defend him before the jury, and we are going to bring to the witness stand a light that will illumine the whole mystery of the Glandier, for we possess the truth.

"When attention was first drawn to the Glandier case our youthful reporter, Joseph Rouletabille, was on the spot and installed in the chateau when every other representative of the press had been denied admission. He worked side by side with Frederic Larsan. He was amazed and terrified at the grave mistake the celebrated detective was about to make.

"France must know—the whole world must know—that on the very evening on which M. Darzac was arrested young Rouletabille entered our editorial office and informed us that he was about to go away on a journey. 'How long I shall be away,' he said, 'I cannot say; perhaps a month, perhaps two, perhaps three. Perhaps I may never return. Here is a letter. If I am not back on the day on which M. Darzac is to appear before the assize court, have this letter opened and read to the court after all the witnesses have been heard. Arrange it with M. Darzac's counsel. M. Darzac is innocent. In this letter is written the name of the murderer, and—that is all I have to say. I am leaving to get my proofs—for the irrefutable evidence of the murderer's guilt.' Our reporter departed. For a long time we were without news from him. But a week ago a stranger called upon our manager and said: 'Act in accordance with the instructions of Joseph Rouletabille if it becomes necessary to do so. The letter left by him holds the truth.' The gentleman who brought us this message would not give us his name.

"Today, the 15th of January, is the day of the trial. Joseph Rouletabille has not returned. It may be we shall never see him again. The press also counts its heroes, its martyrs to duty. It may be he is no longer living. We shall know how to avenge him. Our manager will this afternoon be at the court of assize at Versailles with the letter—the letter containing the name of the murderer."

Those Parisians who flocked to the assize court at Versailles to be present at the trial of what was known as the "mystery of the yellow room" will certainly remember the terrible crush in the courtroom.

The trial itself was presided over by M. de Rocouz, a judge filled with the prejudice of his class, but a man honest at heart. The witnesses had been called. I was there, of course, as were all who had in any way been in touch with the mysteries of the Glandier. I was lucky enough to be called early in the trial, so that I was then able to watch and be present at almost the whole of the proceedings.

The court was so crowded that many lawyers were compelled to find seats on the steps. Behind the bench of justices were representatives from other benches. M. Robert Darzac stood in the prisoner's dock between policemen, tall, handsome and calm. A murmur of admiration rather than of compassion greeted his appearance. He leaned forward toward his counsel, Maitre Henri Robert, who, assisted by his chief secretary, Maitre Andre Hesse, was busily turning over the folios of his brief.

Many expected that M. Stangerson after giving his evidence would have gone over to the prisoner and shaken hands with him, but he left the court without another word. It was remarked that the jurors appeared to be deeply interested in a rapid conversation which the manager of the Epoque was having with Maitre Henri Robert. The

manager later sat down in the front row of the public seats. Some were surprised that he was not asked to remain with the other witnesses in the room reserved for them.

The reading of the indictment was got through, as it always is, without any incident. I shall not here report the long examination to which M. Darzac was subjected. He answered all the questions quickly and easily. His silence as to the important matters of which we know was dead against him. It would seem as if this reticence would be fatal for him. He resented the president's reprimand. He was told that his silence might mean death.

"Very well," he said. "I will submit to it, but I am innocent." With that splendid ability which has made his fame Maitre Robert took advantage of the incident and tried to show that it brought out in noble relief his client's character, for only heroic natures could remain silent for moral reasons in face of such a danger. The eminent advocate, however, only succeeded in assuring those who were already assured of Darzac's innocence. At the adjournment Rouletabille had not yet arrived. Every time a door opened all eyes there turned toward it and back to the manager of the Epoque, who sat impassive in his place. When he once was feeling in his pocket a loud murmur of expectation followed. The letter!

When the trial was resumed Maitre Henri Robert questioned Daddy Mathieu as to his complicity in the death of the keeper. His wife was also brought in and was confronted by her husband. She burst into tears and confessed that she had been the keeper's sweetheart and that her husband had suspected it. She again, however, affirmed that he had had nothing to do with the murder of her lover. Maitre Henri Robert thereupon asked the court to hear Frederic Larsan on this point.

"In a short conversation which I have had with Frederic Larsan during the adjournment," declared the advocate, "he has made me understand that the death of the keeper may have been brought about otherwise than by the hand of Mathieu. It will be interesting to hear Frederic Larsan's theory."

Frederic Larsan was brought in. His explanation was quite clear. "I see no necessity," he said, "for bringing Mathieu in this. I have told M. de Marquet that the man's threats had biased the examining magistrate against him. To me the attempt to murder mademoiselle and the death of the keeper are the work of one and the same person, Mlle. Stangerson's assailant, flying through the court, was fired on. It was thought he was struck, perhaps killed. As a matter of fact, he only stumbled at the moment of his disappearance behind the corner of the right wing of the chateau. There he encountered the keeper, who no doubt tried to seize him. The murderer had in his hand the knife with which he had stabbed Mlle. Stangerson, and with this he killed the keeper."

This very simple explanation appeared at once plausible and satisfying. A murmur of approbation was heard.

"And the murderer? What became of him?" asked the president.

"He was evidently hidden" in an obscure corner at the end of the court. After the people had left the court, carrying with them the body of the keeper, the murderer quietly made his escape."

The words had scarcely left Larsan's mouth when from the back of the court came a youthful voice:

"I agree with Frederic Larsan as to the death of the keeper, but I do not agree with him as to the way the murderer escaped."

Everybody turned around, astonished. The clerks of the court sprang toward the speaker, calling for silence, and the president angrily ordered the intruder to be immediately expelled. The same clear voice, however, was again heard:

"It is I, M. President—Joseph Rouletabille!"

## CHAPTER XXVI.

In Which Joseph Rouletabille Appears in All His Glory.

THE excitement was extreme. Cries from fainting women were to be heard amid the extraordinary bustle and stir. The "majesty of the law" was utterly forgotten. The president tried in vain to make himself heard. Rouletabille made his way forward with difficulty, but by dint of much elbowing reached his manager and greeted him cordially. He was dressed exactly as on the day he left me, even to the ulster over his arm. Turning to the president, he said:

"I beg your pardon, M. President, but I have only just arrived from America. The steamer was late. My name is Joseph Rouletabille!"

The silence which followed his stepping into the witness box was broken by laughter when his words were

heard. Everybody seemed relieved and glad to find him there, as if in the expectation of hearing the truth at last.

But the president was extremely incensed.

"So you are Joseph Rouletabille?" he replied. "Well, young man, I'll teach you what comes of making a farce of justice. By virtue of my discretionary power I hold you at the court's disposition. Take him away!"

Maitre Henri Robert intervened. He began by apologizing for the young man, who, he said, was moved only by the best intentions. He made the president understand that the evidence of a witness who had slept at the Glandier during the whole of that eventful week could not be omitted, and the present witness, moreover, had come to name the real murderer.

"Are you going to tell us who the murderer was?" asked the president, somewhat convinced, though still skeptical.

"I have come for that purpose, M. President!" replied Rouletabille.

An attempt at applause was silenced by the usher.

"Joseph Rouletabille," said Maitre Henri Robert, "has not been regularly subpoenaed as a witness, but I hope, M. President, you will examine him in virtue of your discretionary powers."

A pin drop could have been heard. Rouletabille stood silent, looking sympathetically at Darzac, who for the first time since the opening of the trial showed himself agitated.

"Well," cried the president, "we wait for the name of the murderer."

Rouletabille, feeling in his waistcoat pocket, drew his watch and, looking at it, said:

"M. President, I cannot name the murderer before half past 6 o'clock!" Loud murmurs of disappointment filled the room. Some of the lawyers were heard to say, "He's making fun of us!"

The president in a stern voice said: "This joke has gone far enough. You may retire, monsieur, into the witnesses' room. I hold you at our disposition."

Rouletabille protested. "I assure you, M. President," he cried in his sharp, clear voice, "that when I do name the murderer you will understand why I could not speak before half past 6. I assert this on my honor. I can, however, give you now some explanation of the murder of the keeper. M. Frederic Larsan, who has seen me at work at the Glandier, can tell you with what care I studied this case. I found myself compelled to differ with him in arresting M. Robert Darzac, who is innocent. M. Larsan knows of my good faith and knows that some importance may be attached to my discoveries, which have often corroborated his own."

Frederic Larsan said: "M. President, it will be interesting to hear M. Joseph Rouletabille, especially as he differs from me. We agree that the murderer of the keeper was the assailant of Mlle. Stangerson, but as we are not agreed as to how the murderer escaped I am curious to hear M. Rouletabille's explanation."

"I have no doubt you are," said my friend.

General laughter followed this remark. The president angrily declared that if it was repeated he would have the court cleared.

"Now, young man," said the president, "you have heard M. Frederic Larsan. How did the murderer get away from the court?"

Rouletabille looked at Mme. Mathieu, who smiled back at him sadly.

"Since Mme. Mathieu," he said, "has freely admitted her affair with the keeper—"

"Why, it's the boy!" exclaimed Daddy Mathieu.

"Remove that man!" ordered the president.

Mathieu was removed from the court. Rouletabille went on:

"Since she has made this confession I am free to tell you that she often met the keeper at night on the first floor of the donjon in the room which was once an oratory. Mme. Mathieu came to the chateau that night enveloped in a large black shawl, which served also as a disguise. This was the phantom that disturbed Daddy Jacques. She knew how to imitate the mewling of Mother Angenoux's cat, and she would make the cries to advise the keeper of her presence."

"Previous to the tragedy in the court Mme. Mathieu and the keeper left the donjon together. I learned these facts from my examination of the footmarks in the court the next morning. Bernier, the concierge, whom I had stationed behind the donjon—as he will explain himself—could not see what passed in the court. He did not reach the court until he heard the revolver shots, and then he fired. When the woman parted from the man she went toward the open gate of the court, while he returned to his room."

"He had almost reached the door when the revolvers rang out. He had just reached the corner when a shadow bounded by. Meanwhile Mme. Mathieu, surprised by the revolver shots and by the entrance of people into the court, crouched in the darkness. The court is a large one, and, being near the gate, she might easily

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"A novel always ends with the marriage."  
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Blackguards.  
The term "blackguard" is said to be derived from a number of dirty and tattered boys who attend the horse guards' parade in St. James' park to black the boots and shoes of the soldiers or to do any other dirty office. These boys, from their constant attendance about the time of guard mounting, were nicknamed "the black guards."

Foley's Honey and Tar is a safeguard against serious results from spring colds, which inflame the lungs and develop into pneumonia. Avoid counterfeits, by insisting upon having the genuine Foley's Honey and Tar, which contains no harmful drugs. Burnaugh & Mayfield.

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The French island which was known as Bourbon under the ancient regime was named Reunion under the revolution, le Bonaparte under the empire and Bourbon under the restoration and is Reunion now.

During the spring every one would be benefited by taking Foley's Kidney Remedy. It furnishes a needed tonic to the kidneys after the extra strain of winter, and it purifies the blood by stimulating the kidneys, and so doing them to eliminate the impurities from it. Foley's Kidney Remedy imparts new life and vigor. Pleasant to take. Burnaugh & Mayfield.

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Cuba is known in history under several names. The first was Antilia, then Juana, after a Spanish prince, Fernandina came third, followed by Santiago and the Isle of Ave Maria. The original Indian name, Cubanacan, signifying "where gold is found," was finally adopted, and usage shortened it to the first two syllables.

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"Where are you going, my pretty maiden?" "I'm going a-milking, sir," she said.  
"Then I want to marry you, my pretty maiden. For I own the waterworks here," he said. So they were married, aged, and they have lived ever since on the milky way. —Lippincott's Magazine.

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They Knew the Polo.  
Some years ago when Dr. Nansen visited Leeds on his return from the polar regions he was welcomed by a large crowd of spectators, who cheered vociferously. Two of the most ardent admirers of Nansen were a couple of old men, who kept shouting and waving their sticks. When the celebrated explorer had passed, immediately following in the wake of the carriage came a wagon dragged by three horses, bearing a long iron pole, which belonged to the electric tramways company.  
Directly the old men saw it the following conversation took place: "Well, I'll be blowed! Sista, Bill, he's brout the pole back w' him!" said one.  
"Aye," said the other admirer of Nansen, "and we t' only two 'at's noticed it. There's all running after t' carriage. Sista, there's that ignorant they can't tell t' pole when they see it!"

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