The Mystery of The Yellow Room

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CHAPTER IX.—CONTINUED.

A few minutes later we reached the lake.

It was a little sheet of marshy water, surrounded by reeds, on which floated some dead water lily leaves. The great Fred may have seen us approaching, but we probably interested him very little, for he took hardly any notice of us and continued to be stirring with his cane something which we could not see.

"Look!" said Rouletabille. "Here again are the footmarks of the escaping man. They skirt the lake here and finally disappear just before this path, which leads to the high road to Epinay. The man continued his flight to Paris."

"What makes you think that?" I asked, "since these footmarks are not continued on the path?"

"What makes me think that? Why, these footprints, which I expected to find!" he cried, pointing to the sharply outlined imprint of a neat boot. "See!" And he called to Frederic Larsan.

"M. Fred, these neat footprints seem to have been made since the discovery of the crime."

"Yes, young man, yes. They have been carefully made," replied Fred without raising his head. "You see, there are steps that come and steps that go back."

"And the man had a bicycle!" cried the reporter.

Here, after looking at the marks of the bicycle, which followed, going and coming, the neat footprints, I thought I might intervene.

"The bicycle explains the disappearance of the murderer's big footprints," I said. "The murderer, with his rough boots, mounted a bicycle. His accomplice, the wearer of the neat boots, had come to wait for him on the edge of the lake with the bicycle. It might be supposed that the murderer was working for the other."

"No, no!" replied Rouletabille, with a strange smile. "I have expected to find these footmarks from the very beginning. These are not the footmarks of the murderer."

"Then there were two?"

"No; there was but one, and he had no accomplice."

"Very good! Very good!" cried Frederic Larsan.

"Look!" continued the young reporter, showing us the ground where it had been disturbed by big and heavy heels. "The man seated himself there and took off his hobnailed boots which he had worn only for the purpose of misleading detection, and then no doubt, taking them away with him, he stood up in his own boots and quietly and slowly regained the high road, holding his bicycle in his hand, for he could not venture to ride it on this rough path. That accounts for the lightness of the impression made by the wheels along it in spite of the softness of the ground. If there had been a man on the bicycle the wheels would have sunk deeply into the soil. No, no; there was but one man there—the murderer on foot."

"Bravo! Bravo!" cried Fred again. And, coming suddenly toward us and planting himself in front of M. Robert Darzac, he said to him:

"If we had a bicycle here we might demonstrate the correctness of the young man's reasoning, M. Robert Darzac. Do you know whether there is one at the chateau?"

"No," replied M. Darzac, "there is not. I took mine four days ago to Paris, the last time I came to the chateau before the crime."

"That's a pity," replied Fred very coldly. Then, turning to Rouletabille, he said: "If we go on at this rate we'll both come to the same conclusion. Have you any idea as to how the murderer got away from the yellow room?"

"Yes," said my young friend, "I have an idea."

"So have I," said Fred, "and it must be the same as yours. There are no two ways of reasoning in this affair. I am waiting for the arrival of my chief before offering any explanation to the examining magistrate."

"Ah! Is the chief of the police coming?"

"Yes, this afternoon. He is going to summon before the magistrate in the laboratory all those who have played any part in this tragedy. It will be very interesting. It is a pity you won't be able to be present."

"I shall be present," said Rouletabille confidently.

"Really you are an extraordinary fellow for your age!" replied the detective in a tone not wholly free from irony. "You'd make a wonderful detective—if you had a little more method—if you didn't follow your instincts and that bump on your forehead. As I have already several times observed, M. Rouletabille, you reason too much. You do not allow yourself to be guided by what you have seen. What do you say to the handkerchief full of blood and the red mark of the hand on the wall? You have seen the stain on the wall, but I have only seen the handkerchief."

"Bah!" cried Rouletabille. "The murderer was wounded in the hand by Mlle. Stangerson's revolver!"

"Defective observation—defective observation! The examination of the handkerchief, the numberless little round scarlet stains, the impression of drops which I found in the tracks of the footprints at the moment when they were made on the floor, prove to me that the murderer was not wounded at all. M. Rouletabille, the murderer bled at the nose!"

The great Fred spoke quite seriously. However, I could not refrain from uttering an exclamation.

The reporter looked gravely at Fred, who looked gravely at him. And Fred immediately concluded:

"The man allowed the blood to flow into his hand and handkerchief and dried his hand on the wall. The fact is highly important," he added, "because there is no need of his being wounded in the hand for him to be the murderer."

Rouletabille seemed to be thinking deeply. After a moment he said:

"There is something—a something, M. Frederic Larsan, much graver than the misuse of logic, the disposition of mind in some detectives which makes them in perfect good faith twist logic to the necessities of their preconceived ideas. Beware of judicial error, M. Fred; it will trip you up."

And, laughing a little in a slightly bantering tone, his hands in his pockets, Rouletabille fixed his cunning eyes on the great Fred.

Frederic Larsan silently contemplated the young reporter who pretended to be as wise as himself. Shrugging his shoulders, he bowed to us and moved quickly away, hitting the stones on his path with his stout cane.

Rouletabille watched his retreat and then turned toward us, his face joyous and triumphant.

"I shall beat him!" he cried. "I shall beat the great Fred, clever as he is! I shall beat them all!"

And he danced a double shuffle. Suddenly he stopped. My eyes followed his gaze. They were fixed on M. Robert Darzac, who was looking anxiously at the impression left by his feet side by side with the elegant footmarks. There was not a particle of difference between them!

We thought he was about to faint. His eyes, bulging with terror, avoided us, while his right hand, with a spasmodic movement, twitched at the beard that covered his honest, gentle and now despairing face. At length regaining his self possession, he bowed to us and, remarking in a changed voice that he was obliged to return to the chateau, left us.

"The deuce!" exclaimed Rouletabille.

He also appeared to be deeply concerned. From his pocketbook he took a piece of white paper, as I had seen him do before, and with his scissors cut out the shape of the neat bootmarks that were on the ground. Then he fitted the new paper pattern with the one he had previously made. The two were exactly alike. Rising, Rouletabille exclaimed suddenly, "The deuce!" Presently he added, "Yet I believe M. Robert Darzac to be an honest man." He then led me on the road to the Donjon inn, which we could see on the highway by the side of a small clump of trees.

CHAPTER X.

"We Shall Have to Eat Red Meat—Now."

THE Donjon inn was at least two centuries old, perhaps older. Under its signboard over the threshold a man with a crabbed looking face was standing, seemingly plunged in unpleasant thought, if the wrinkles on his forehead and the knitting of his brows were any indication.

When Rouletabille and I were close to him he deigned to see us and asked us in a tone anything but engaging whether we wanted anything. He was no doubt the not very amiable landlord of this charming dwelling place. As we expressed a hope that he would be good enough to furnish us with a breakfast, he assured us that he had no provisions.

"You may take us in," Rouletabille said to him. "We are not policemen."

"I'm not afraid of the police. I'm not afraid of any one," replied the man.

I had made my friend understand by a sign that we should do better not to insist; but, being determined to enter the inn, he slipped by the man on the doorstep and was in the common room.

"Come on," he said. "It is very comfortable here."

A good fire was blazing in the chimney, and we held our hands to the warmth it sent out. It was a morning in which the approach of winter was unmistakable. The room was a tolerably large one, furnished with two heavy tables, some stools, a counter decorated with rows of bottles of sirup and alcohol.

"That's a fine fire for roasting a chicken," said Rouletabille.

"We have no chicken, not even a wretched rabbit," said the landlord.

"I know," said my friend slowly—"I know. We shall have to eat red meat now."

I confess I did not in the least understand what Rouletabille meant by what he had said, but the landlord as soon as he heard the words uttered an oath, which he at once stifled, and placed himself at our orders as obediently as M. Robert Darzac had done when he heard Rouletabille's mysterious sentence, "The presbytery has lost nothing of its charm nor the garden its brightness."

The man pushed open a little side door and called to somebody to bring him half a dozen eggs and a piece of beefsteak. The commission was quickly executed by a strongly built young woman with beautiful blond hair and large, handsome eyes, who regarded us with curiosity.

The innkeeper said to her roughly:

"Get out, and if the Green Man comes don't let me see him!"

She disappeared. Rouletabille took the eggs, which had been brought to him in a bowl, and the meat, which was on a dish, placed all carefully beside him in the chimney, unhooked a frying pan and a gridiron and began to beat up our omelet before proceeding to grill our beefsteak. He then ordered two bottles of cider and seemed to take as little notice of our host as our host did of him. The landlord let us do our own cooking and set our table near one of the windows.

Suddenly I heard him mutter:

"Ah, there he is!"

His face had changed, expressing fierce hatred. He went and glued himself to one of the windows, watching the road. There was no need for me to draw Rouletabille's attention. He had already left our omelet and had joined the landlord at the window. I went with him.

A man dressed entirely in green velvet, his head covered with a huntsman's cap of the same color, was advancing leisurely, lighting a pipe as he walked. He carried a fowling piece slung at his back. His movements displayed an almost aristocratic ease. He wore eyeglasses and appeared to be about five and forty years of age. His hair as well as his mustache were salt gray. He was remarkably handsome. As he passed near the inn he hesitated, as if asking himself whether or no he should enter it, gave a glance toward us, took a few whiffs at his pipe and then resumed his walk at the same nonchalant pace.

Rouletabille and I looked at our host. His flashing eyes, his clinched hands, his trembling lips, told us of his tumultuous feelings.

"He has done well not to come in here today!" he hissed.

"Who is that man?" asked Rouletabille, returning to his omelette.

"The Green Man," growled the innkeeper. "Don't you know him? Then all the better for you. He is not an acquaintance to make. Well, he is M. Stangerson's forest keeper."

"You don't appear to like him very much?" asked the reporter, pouring his omelet into the frying pan.

"Nobody likes him, monsieur. He's an upstart, who must once have had a fortune of his own, and he forgives nobody because in order to live he has been compelled to become a servant. A keeper is as much a servant as any other, isn't he? Upon my word, one would say that he is the master of the Glandier and that all the land and woods belong to him. He'll not let a poor creature eat a morsel of bread on the grass—his grass!"

"Does he often come here?"

"Too often. But I've made him understand that his face doesn't please me, and for a month past he hasn't been here. The Donjon inn has never existed for him! He hasn't had time—been too much engaged in paying court to the landlady of the Three Lilies at Saint Michel. A bad fellow. There isn't an honest man who can bear him. Why, the concierges of the chateau would turn their eyes away from a picture of him!"

"The concierges of the chateau are honest people then?"

"Yes, they are, as true as my name's Mathieu, monsieur. I believe them to be honest."

"Yet they've been arrested?"

"What does that prove? But I don't want to mix myself up in other people's affairs."

"And what do you think of the affair?"

"Of the attack on poor Mlle. Stangerson? A good girl. Much loved everywhere in the country. That's what I think of it—and many things besides. But that's nobody's business."

"Not even mine?" insisted Rouletabille.

The innkeeper looked at him sideways and said gruffly:

"Not even yours."

The omelet ready, we sat down at table and were silently eating when the door was pushed open and an old woman, dressed in rags, leaning on a stick, her head doddering, her white hair hanging loosely over her wrinkled forehead, appeared on the threshold.

"Ah, there you are, Mother Angenoux! It's long since we saw you last," said our host.

"I have been very ill, very nearly dying," said the old woman. "If ever you should have any scraps for the Bete du Bon Dieu"—

And she entered, followed by a cat larger than any I had ever believed could exist. The beast looked at us and gave so hopeless a miau that I shuddered. I had never heard so lugubrious a cry.

As if drawn by the cat's cry a man followed the old woman in. It was the Green Man. He saluted by raising his hand to his cap and seated himself at a table near to ours.

"A glass of cider, Daddy Mathieu," he said.

As the Green Man entered Daddy Mathieu had started violently, but visibly mastering himself he said:

"I've not more cider. I served the last bottles to these gentlemen."

"Then give me a glass of white wine," said the Green Man without showing the least surprise.

"I've no more white wine—no more anything," said Daddy Mathieu surlily.

"How is Mme. Mathieu?"

"Quite well, thank you."

So the young woman with the large, tender eyes whom we had just seen was the wife of this repugnant and brutal rustic, whose jealousy seemed to emphasize his physical ugliness.

Slamming the door behind him, the innkeeper left the room. Mother Angenoux was still standing, leaning on her stick, the cat at her feet.

"You've been ill, Mother Angenoux? Is that why we have not seen you for the last week?" asked the Green Man.

"Yes, M. Keeper. I have been able to get up but three times to go to pray to St. Genevieve, our good patroness, and the rest of the time I have been lying on my bed. There was no one to care for me but the Bete du Bon Dieu!"

"Did she not leave you?"

"Neither by day nor by night."

"Are you sure of that?"

"As I am of paradise."

"Then how was it, Mme. Angenoux, that all through the night of the murder nothing but the cry of the Bete du Bon Dieu was heard?"

Mother Angenoux planted herself in front of the forest keeper and struck the floor with her stick.

"I don't know anything about it," she said. "But shall I tell you something? There are no two cats in the world that cry like that. Well, on the night of the murder I also heard the cry of the Bete du Bon Dieu outside, and yet she was on my knees and did not mew once, I swear. I crossed myself when I heard that, as if I had heard the devil."

I looked at the keeper when he put the last question, and I am much mistaken if I did not detect an evil smile on his lips. At that moment the noise of loud quarreling reached us. We even thought we heard a dull sound of blows, as if some one was being beaten. The Green Man quickly rose and hurried to the door by the side of the fireplace, but it was opened by the landlord, who appeared and said to the keeper:

"Don't alarm yourself, monsieur. It is my wife. She has the toothache." And he laughed. "Here, Mother Angenoux; here are some scraps for your cat."

He held out a packet to the old woman, who took it eagerly and went out of the door, closely followed by her cat.

"Then you won't serve me?" asked the Green Man.

Daddy Mathieu's face was placid and no longer retained its expression of hatred.

"I've nothing for you—nothing for you. Take yourself off."

The Green Man quietly refilled his pipe, lit it, bowed to us and went out. No sooner was he over the threshold than Daddy Mathieu slammed the door after him, and, turning toward us, with eyes bloodshot and frothing at the mouth, he hissed to us, shaking his clinched fist at the door he had just shut on the man he evidently hated:

"I don't know who you are who tell me 'We shall have to eat red meat now,' but if it will interest you to know it—that man is the murderer!"

With which words Daddy Mathieu immediately left us. Rouletabille returned toward the fireplace and said:

"Now we'll grill our steak. How do you like the cider? It's a little tart, but I like it."

We saw no more of Daddy Mathieu that day, and absolute silence reigned in the inn when we left it after placing 5 francs on the table in payment for our feast.

Rouletabille at once set off on a three mile walk around Professor Stangerson's estate. He halted for some ten minutes at the corner of a narrow road black with soot near to some charcoal burners' huts in the forest of St. Genevieve, which touches on the road from Epinay to Corbeil, to tell me that the murderer had certainly passed that way before entering the grounds and concealing himself in the little clump of trees.

"You don't think, then, that the keeper knows anything of it?" I asked.

"We shall see that later," he replied. "For the present I'm not interested in what the landlord said about the man. The landlord hates him. I didn't take you to breakfast at the Donjon inn for the sake of the Green Man."

Then Rouletabille, with great precaution, glided, followed by me, toward the little building which, standing near the park gate, served for the home of the concierges who had been arrested that morning. With the skill of an acrobat he got into the lodge by an upper window which had been left open and returned ten minutes later. He said only "Ah!" a word which in his mouth signified many things.

We were about to take the road leading to the chateau when a considerable stir at the park gate attracted our attention. A carriage had arrived, and some people had come from the chateau to meet it. Rouletabille pointed out to me a gentleman who descended from it.

"That's the chief of the Paris police," he said. "Now we shall see what Frederic Larsan has up his sleeve and whether he is so much cleverer than anybody else."

The carriage of the chief was followed by three other vehicles containing reporters, who were also desirous of entering the park. But two gendarmes stationed at the gate had evidently received orders to refuse admission to anybody. The chief of police calmed their impatience by undertaking to furnish to the press that evening all the information he could give that would not interfere with the judicial inquiry.

CHAPTER XI.

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

AMONG 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 literature.

THE REGISTRAR'S NARRATIVE.

The examining magistrate and I, 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 concierges."

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. Stangerson, M. Robert Darzac, Daddy Jacques and the two concierges, the chief of police, the registrar and myself. We shall all be on the same footing. The concierges may for the moment 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 Mlle. 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 Mlle. 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 question.

"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 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."

"Ah," 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 you."

"We were coming to help!" they whined.

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

As before, we were unable to get two connecting thoughts out of them. They persisted in their denials and swore by heaven and all the saints that they were in bed when they heard the sound of the revolver shot.

"It was not one, but two shots, that 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 fired."

"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 concierge 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 of a strong character, "I understand 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."

"Mlle. Stangerson is much better and is rapidly recovering from her wounds. The marriag… layed, is it not, … the chief of police.

"I hope so."

"What! Is there any … that?"

M. Stangerson did n… Robert Darzac seemed … that his hand trembled … his watch chain. M. Dax … did M. de Marquet. B… dently embarrassed.

"You understand, M. S…" said, "that in an affair … this we cannot neglect … must know all, even the … seemingly most futile … ing the victim, informa… the most insignificant … doubt that this marriage … place? You expressed a … hope implies a doubt … doubt?"

M. Stangerson made a … to recover himself.

"Yes, monsieur," he … "You are right. It will … you should know somethi… concealed it might appe… portance. M. Darzac … n this."

M. Darzac, whose pal… ment seemed to me … abnormal, made a sign … gathered he was unable …

"I want you to know … ued M. Stangerson, "th… has sworn never to le… heres firmly to her oath … my prayers and all that … to induce her to mar… known M. Robert Darza… He loves my child, and … she loved him, becaus… cently consented to … which I desire with all … am an old man, monsie… a happy hour to me wh… after I had gone she … her side one who loved … would help her in com… mon labors. I love … Darzac both for his g… and for his devotion … two days before the … know not what reason … declared to me that sh… marry M. Darzac."

A dead silence follo… son's words. It was a … with suspense.

"Did mademoiselle g… planation—did she tell … motive was?" asked M…

"She told me she was … ry; that she had waited … said she had given m… the matter, and while … esteem, even affection … she felt it would be … remained as they were …"

"That is very strange … Dax.

"Strange!" repeated …

"You'll certainly not … tive there, M. Dax," … said, with a cold smile …

"In any case, the … theft," said the chief …

"Oh, we are quite … that!" exclaimed the … trate.

At that moment the … oratory opened, and … charge of the gendarm… handed a card to the … trate. M. de Marquet … tered a half angry ex…

"This is really too m…

"What is it?" asked …

"It's the card of a … engaged on the Epoque … Rouletabille. It has th… sen on it, 'One of the … crime was robbery.'"

The chief smiled.

"Ah, young Rouletab… of him. He is conside… er. Let him come in."

M. Joseph Rouletab… laboratory, bowed to … for M. de Marquet to … plain his presence.

"You pretend, mon… know the motive for … that that motive—in … the evidence that has … ing—was robbery?"

"No, monsieur; I do … I do not say that robb… tive for the crime, and … it was."

"Then what is the … card?"

"It means that robb… the motives for the cr…

"What leads you to …

"If you will be goo… company me I will sh…

(Continued nex…)

Soldier Balks D…

It seemed to J. A… war veteran, of Ke… plot existed betwee… trouble and the gr… death. "I contracted … cold," he writes … cough that stuck to … all remedies, for ye… ran down to 110 … began to use Dr. K… covery, which rest… completely. … For seve… nate Coughs, Hem… and to prevent Pn… rivaled. 50c and $1 … tle free. Guaranteed … kendall.

TIMBER FO…

Four and a half m… growth fir, consisti… only mile and a half … Siuslaw river, on … stream. Can be … cash. (Need the mo… Apply to … No. 4… Lo…

If you have not … light or gas bill … the next few days … be cut off on all … 15th.