THE PERFUME OF THE LADY IN BLACK

By GASTON LEROUX, Anthor of "The Mystery of the Yellow Room."

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CHAPTER V.

The Castle of Horrors.

TAT HEN he slights at the Garavan station, whatever the season. the traveler might almost fancy himself in the garden of Hesperides, whose golden apples excited the desire of the conqueror of

the Nemean lion. When, after alighting from the train, we came to the bank of the sea our eyes were struck by a dazzling silhouette of a castle standing upon the peninsula of Hercules, which the works accomplished on the frontier have, alas, nearly destroyed. The oblique rays of the sun which were falling upon the walls and the old square tower made the reflection of the tower glisten in the waters like a breast-The tower seemed to stand guard like an old sentinel over the bay of Garavan before us like a blue lake of fire.

Upon the lower steps of the stairway which led to a tower was the charming figure of Arthur Rance's wife, who had been the beautiful

Edith Prescott. The voice of the young wife was her greatest charm, although the grace of her entire being was perfect. She greeted us in the simple fashion-the fashion of the ideal hostess. Rouletabille and myself made an effort to tell her that we had intended to look for a stopping place in the village. She lifted her shoulders with a gesture that was almost childish and said that our rooms were all ready for us.

"Come, come! You haven't seen the chateau. Oh, I will show you 'la Louve' another rime. It is the only gloomy corner in the place. It makes me shiver. But, do you know, I love to shiver! Oh, M. Rouletabille, you'll tell me stories that will make me shiver some-day, won't you?"

And, chattering thus, she glided in front of us in her white gown. She made a singularly pretty picture in this garden of the orient between the threatening old tower and the carved stone flowers of the ruined chapel.

And at our left is the immense tow er of the tweifth century, which, Mme Edith tells us, the natives call "la Louve" and which neither time nor war nor tempest has been able to destroy. It is just as it appeared in 1107, when the Saracens were able to make no beadway in their attacks upon it. It was there that Mme. Edith had chosen to have her rogms. stopped looking at the objects around us to look at the people. Arthur Rance was gazing at Mme. Darzac when my eyes fell upon them, and Rouletabille seemed to be lost in thought and far. far away from us all. Darzac and Stangerson were talking in low tones. The same thought was filling the minds of each one of these people, both those who kept silence and those who if they spoke were careful to say nothing which could give a clew to

We had passed through the postern and found ourselves in another court Opposite us was the old donjon. Its appearance was more than impressive. It was high and square, and it was on account of its shape that it was known as the square tower. And as this tower occupies the most important corner of the fortification it was also known as the corner tower.

"That tower yonder in the opposite corner," went on Edith, "is the Tower of Charles the Bold, so called because he was the duke who furnished the plans when it became necessary to transform the defenses of the chateau so as to make them resist the attacks of the artillery. Old Bob has made this tower his study. I have never been able to refuse old Bob anything he wanted. Old Bob," she added, with a charming smile, "Is my uncle. That is the name he taught me to call him by when I was a little thing. He went to Paris on the 5 o'clock train, but he will be back tomorrow. Ah, here is au

'And she showed us in the center part of the second court a small shaft which she called romantically an oubliette and above which a eucalyptus tree, with its white blossoms and its leafless limbs, leaned like a woman over a fountain

Since we had entered the second court we understood better-the topographical plan of the Fort of Hercules. The castle had been built in 1140 by the seigneurs of Mortola. In order to isolate it completely from the land they had made an island of the peninsula by cutting away the narrow isthmus which connected ir with the mainland. The isthmus in the course of the centuries had again resumed its and made square, although they were old form, the drawbridge had been thrown down, and the trenches had filled up. The walls of the Chateau of Hercules followed the outline of the peninsula and were built upon the of his collection. rocks, and the latter in some places extended over the waters in such a manner that a little ship might have taken shelter beneath them, fearing no bers on the first floor and a little sitenemy while thus protected. This ting room for guests. It was to these had been, but he knew that he must

of the Genoese, had been repaired to the rear of the Rance suit. some slight extent some time afterlittle door opened in the side of the tower upon the passageway and enabled who came or went. The entrance to the chateau. As I have said, in passing through this gate one found himself in the first court, closed in on all sides by the walls and the towers. As to the towers B, B' and B", which had for a considerable time longer preserved their uniformity and their first height and the pointed roofs of which had been replaced by a platform designed to support the artillery, they had later been razed to the height of the boulevard parapets, and their shape seemed almost like that of a half moon. The new castle on the plan

La Louve, as I have said, had not been changed at all, but still reared its dark bulk against the blue waters of the Mediterranean, a strange, weird figure, looking thousands of years old. I have speken also of the ruins of the chapel. The ancient commons (shown on the map by Wi, near the parapet between B and B', had been transformed into the stables and the kitchens.

One could only penetrate into the second inclosure through the postern (indicated by H) which Mrs Arthur Rance called "the tower of the gardener" and which was actually only a pavilion, formerly defended by the attempted to break away, as if to tower B" and by another tower situated at C and which had enginely disappeared at the time of the erection of the new castle (shown at C C). A sill exists, wide and deep, but the man."

suffered greatly during the last sieges | M. Stangerson was in "la Louve," in that he would never touch wine again.

Mme. Edith herself showed us to our to Rochers Rouges been made habitable that magnificent past. They had been by Mrs. Rance, who used them as serv- swept and garnished with a care that ants' quarters. The front of the tow- was almost touching. As I have aler A served as the keeper's lodge. A ready said, the two sleeping rooms were separated by a little parior.

After dressing for dinner I called any one looking out to observe all those Rouletabille to ask him if he were ready. There was no answer. I went the castle was closed only by a little into his room and discovered with gate which any one might open at surprise that he had already gone out, his fossils-the man who must have will. This entrance was the only one I went to the window of his room, by which it was possible to get into which opened, like my own, upon the empty court.

But what was that dark shadow? boat which a fisherman was rowing. keeping rhythmic time with the two oars, I recognized the form of Larsan. Why should I try to decelve myself by saying even for one moment that I was wrong? He was only too easily to be recognized.

when we looked upon him only as the Edith. wonderfully resourceful and brilliant erect, his arms folded, his face turned back had been absent in Patagonia. tion on the threshold of the night, which slowly crept up behind him and enveloped him in its shades.

When he had vanished I lowered my eyes and beheld two figures in the Court of Charles the Bold. They were near the little door of the square tow-One of these forms the tallerwas supporting the other and speaking in tones of entreaty. The smaller throw itself into the sea. I heard the

"Be careful. It is a gage of demoat and a wall started from B" to fiance. You shall not leave me this abut on I at the Tower of Charles the evening." Rouletabille's voice answer-Bold, advancing at C in the form of a ed: "He must land upon the bank. spur to the midst of the first court Let me hurry to the bank." Mathilde and entirely isolating the court, which spoke again. Her voice was terrible they completely closed in. The most to hear. "I forbid you to touch that

voice of Mme. Darzac say:

Rance had already known Miss Prescott's uncle, the fine old man who bore ward and had shortly before we came rooms, which recalled to us nothing of the nickname of "Old Bob" and who was as celebrated for his adventures as an explorer as for his discoveries as a geologist. He seemed as gentle as a sheep, but he had hunted many a tiger through the pampas of South America. He had spent half his life south of the Rio Negro among the Patagonians in seeking for the man of the tertiary period, or, at least, for been contemporaneous with the immense mammoths and mastodons. He generally returned from these expeditions with a respectable collection of Standing erect at the prow of a little tibias and femurs and also with a rich display of skins of wild beasts, which showed that the old savant knew how to use more modern arms than the stone ax and bow and arrow.

> All these details were given me later by Arthur Rance himself. He had been one of "Old Bob's" pupils, but Oh, yes; it was he! It was "the had not seen him in many years until great Fred." as we used to call him be made the acquaintance of Miss

Miss Edith, upon the occasion when secret service agent. The boat, silent, Arthur Rance had been presented to with its motionless statue at the prow, her, had seemed somewhat more melpassed beneath the windows of the ancholy than she usually was, because square tower and to the shores of the she had received disquieting news of Pointe de Garibaldi. The man stood her uncle. The latter for four years toward the tower, a diabolical appari- in his last letter he had told his niece that he was ill and that he feared that he should not live to see her again. Three months later, however, having received another letter, she suddenly resolved to go all alone to South Amer ica and join her uncle. During those three months important events had transpired. Miss Edith and been touched by the remorse of Arthur Rance, and when Miss Prescott departed for Patagonia no one was astonished to find that "Old Bob's" old pupil was going to accompany her. If the engagement was not officially announced, it was because the pair preferred to wait for the consent of the geologist, Miss Edith and Arthur Rance were met at St. Louis by the young woman's uncle. Rance, who had not seen him in years, declared to him that he had grown younger. When his niece informed him of her engagement the uncle manifested great delight. The three returned to Philadelphia for the wedding. Miss Edith had never been in France, and Arthur determined that their honeymoon should be spent there. And it was thus that they found, as will be told a little later, a scientific reason for locating in the neighborhood of Mentone, not exactly in France, but a hundred meters from the frontier, in Italy, at Rochers Rouges.

The gong had sounded for dinner. and Arthur Rance was coming to look for us, so we repaired to "la Louve," in the lower hall of which we were to dine. When we were all assembled Mme. Edith asked whether any of us had noticed a little boat which had made the circle of the fortress and in which a man was standing erect. The man's strange attitude had struck ber, she said, then added:

"Oh, I know who it is, for I know the fisherman who rowed the boat He is a great friend of 'Old Bob.' " "Ah, then you know the fisherman,

madame?" asked Rouletabille. "He comes to the castle sometimes to sell fish. The people around the village have given him an odd name. which I don't know how to say in their impossible patois, but I can translete it. They call him 'the hangman of the sea.' A pretty name, isn't it?"

The repast was one of the gloomlest in my recollection. The specter of Larsan hovered before our minds' eye; we felt his actual presence

(To be continued.)

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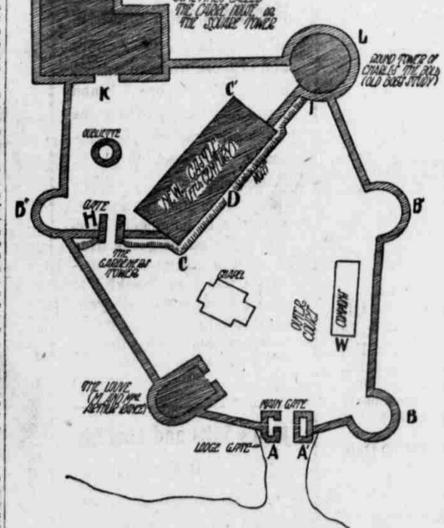
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PLAN OF THE CASTLE OF HERCULES.

walls had been torn down all the, I descended to the court, where i length of the new castle and replaced by the walls of the castle itself.

The pavement of the inner courteld guidebooks of the country call it excitement. He called out; still-was a little higher than that of the outer court. One could penetrate into the old castle only (designated by F) by a little door, K. The old inhabitants of the country never spoke of it except as the square tower, to distinguish it from the round tower, or the Tower of Charles the Bold, as they sometimes called the latter. A parapet similar to the one which closed in the outer court was built between the towers B", F and L. closing the inner court as firmly as the outer. We have seen that the round tower had been in years past torn down to

balf its former height. This tower had a number of tiny chambers above and an immense octagon chamber below. One descended into this chamber by a steep and narrow stairway. The ceiling of the octagon room was supported by four great cylindrical pillars, and from its walls opened three enormous embrasures for three enormous cannons. It was of this room that Mme. Edith had wished to make a dining room. The great windows had been enlarged still guarded by barriers of iron. This the spot chosen by Mme. Edith's uncle for a workshop and the abiding place

Of the chateau of the seventeenth century, known as the new castle. they had only repaired two bedcham-

found Rouletabille alone. I spoke to him, but he did not answer. I went on into the outer court, and I saw the Court of Charles the Bold, as the Darzac coming toward me in greatest "Did you see him?"

> "Yes, I saw him," I replied. "And she-my wife-do you know whether she saw him?" "She saw him too. She was with

> Rouletabille when he passed." Robert Darzac was trembling like an aspen leaf. He told me that when he saw the boat and its passenger he had rushed like a madman to the shore, but that before he had reached the Pointe de Garibaldi the bark had disappeared as if by enchantment. Darzac left me and burried away to seek Mathilde. But he returned gloomy and grieved. The door of his wife's apartment was locked, and she

would not see him.

We remained together upon the rampart gasing at the night which had carried Larsan away. In order to change the direction of his thoughts I asked him a few questions regarding the Rance household. He told me that, after the trial at Versailles, Rance had returned to Philadelphia, and there one evening at a family dinner party he had found himself seated beside a charming young girl who had interested him at once by a display of interest in literature and art. Somewhat tower (shown on the map at L) was haughty, yet gentle and melancholy. she at once recalled to the young man the heroines of Walter Scott, who, he soon learned, was her favorite author. From the first she attracted him strongly. But Rance had so far forgot himself as to drink too much wine. He never realized what his offense building was marvelously well adapted that Rouletabille and myself were as- have committed some frightful breach for defense.

The fort was entered by way of the north gate, which guarded the two towers, A and A', connected by a passageway. These towers, which had tower for "Old Boh." who slent there.

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