

THE PERFUME OF THE LADY IN BLACK

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

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CHAPTER XVII.

The Return of Arthur Rance.

THE weapon belonged to Prince Galitch, but there was no doubt in the mind of any one of us that it had been stolen by Old Bob, and we could not forget that with his latest breath Bernier had accused Larsan of being his assassin. Never had the image of Old Bob and that of Larsan been so inextricably confounded in our restless spirits as since Roulettable had found "the oldest dagger known to the human race" dripping with the blood of Bernier Mme. Edith had at once realized that henceforth the fate of Old Bob lay in the hands of Roulettable. And therefore Mme. Edith, who in her filial affection had not ceased to believe that the man who lay on his bed in the square tower was really her uncle, had begun to imagine, thanks to the bloody weapon, that the invisible Larsan had woven so strong a web of circumstantial evidence around Old Bob that it could scarcely be broken with the design doubtless of making the old man suffer the punishment for the wretch's own crimes and also the dangerous weight of his personality. Mme. Edith trembled for Old Bob and for herself.

And the incriminating fact remained that there had been nothing anywhere around the corpse of Bernier but the stone knife which Old Bob had stolen! She read the certainty of this conviction in the eyes and in the manner of Roulettable and of Darzac. But she understood as soon as the young man began speaking that he seemed to have no other end in view than to save Old Bob from the suspicions of the authorities.

Roulettable in giving his evidence proved with a logical accuracy that overwhelmed the examining magistrate and planned the delegate into despair that the deed could only have been committed by the dead man himself. The four persons at the postern gate and the two persons in Old Bob's room had each been looking at the others and had not lost sight of each other while some one was killing Bernier a few steps away, so it was impossible to believe that the killing could have been done by any other than the victim.

To this the examining magistrate, greatly interested, replied by inquiring whether any of us had reason to suspect any motive for suicide on the part of Bernier, to which Roulettable answered that the supposition of suicide might easily be laid aside and that of accident substituted for it. The stone, which might have attracted his attention by its strange form, might have been picked up by Pere Bernier, and if he had happened to slip and fall while holding it in his hand everything would be explained, and very simply. Pere Bernier undoubtedly must have thus unfortunately fallen upon this triangular flint, which had pierced his heart.

One of the physicians summoned to care for Old Bob was called, and he decided that Bernier's fatal wound was caused by the flint.

As to Mme. Edith and myself, after some futile and useless questions, asked while the doctors were at the bedside of Old Bob, we were allowed to leave the room, and we went to sit in the little parlor just outside the bedroom and were there when the magistrates were ready to depart.

Edith suddenly seized me by the hand and cried out:

"Do not leave me! I beg of you don't leave me! I have only you left. I do not know where Prince Galitch is—I do not know anything about my husband. That is what makes this so horrible. Arthur sent me a message saying that he was going in search of Tullio. He does not know even yet that Bernier has been murdered. Has he found the hangman of the sea? Is it from this man—from Tullio now that I expect the truth! And not a word has come! It is horrible!"

As she took my hand so confidently and held it for a moment in her own I felt that I was for Mme. Edith with all my heart and soul, and I assured her that she might rely upon my devotion.

Roulettable never failed to cast a glance in our direction every time he had the opportunity.

"Ah, he is watching us!" exclaimed Mme. Edith.

"You ought to be grateful to Roulettable," I ventured to remind her, "for his intervention and his silence relative to the oldest knife known to the human race." If the officers had learned that this stone dagger belonged to your uncle Bob, what could have hindered them from placing him under arrest?"

"Oh!" she cried bitterly. "Your friend has as many good reasons to keep silence as I have, and I dread only one thing, M. Salsclair—I dread only one thing."

"And what is that?" "I fear lest he has saved my uncle from the authorities only to ruin him more completely. At all events, it is necessary to be ready for anything, and I know how to defend him so long as I draw breath." And she showed me a tiny revolver which was hidden in her gown.

"Is it actual truth that you are ready to defend me?" she demanded, turning her beautiful eyes full upon my own.

"I am ready." "Against your friend even?" "If it should be necessary," I answered, with a sigh, passing my hand across my forehead.

"Very well; I believe you," she answered. "In that case I will leave you here for a few minutes. You will guard this door for me."

And she pointed to the door behind which Old Bob was resting. Then she ran out of the room. Where was she going? She confessed to me later. She was going to look for Prince Galitch. Oh, woman, woman!

She had scarcely disappeared under the arch when Roulettable and M. Darzac entered the room. They had heard all that had passed. Roulettable advanced to my side and told me quietly that he was aware that I had betrayed him.

"You are using a large word, Roulettable!" I exclaimed. "You know that I am not in the habit of betraying any one. Mme. Edith is really very much to be pitied, and you do not pity her enough, my friend."

"Ah, well, you pity her too much." I started to make some reply, but Roulettable cut short my words with a dry gesture.

"I ask you only one thing—only one, you understand. It is that, no matter what may happen—no matter what may happen—you shall not address one word to either M. Darzac or to myself."

"That will be a very easy thing to promise," I replied, foolishly irritated, and I turned my back upon him.

But at the same moment the officers coming out of the castle called to us. The inquest was at an end. There was no doubt, in their eyes, after the declaration of the doctors, that the affair had been an accident, and that was the verdict which they felt obliged to render. Darzac and Roulettable accompanied them to the outer gate.

As I stood leaning on my elbows at the window I suddenly heard a sound which fell upon the evening air like the blow of an immense gong, and I knew that it was Roulettable who had ordered the iron gates to be closed.



ALL THREE WERE ARMED WITH MUSKETS AND PLACED THEMSELVES IN SILENCE BEFORE THE DOOR.

Not a single minute passed after that when I saw Mme. Edith rush into the room and hurry to me as though I were her only refuge.

Then I saw Darzac appear, then Roulettable, and leaning on his arm was the Lady in Black. It could now very easily be seen that she was making a powerful effort to bite the horror which in spite of all, pierced through her troubled glance and to hide from us the emotion which made her cling feverishly to the arm of her young companion. Darzac, too, had the same and resolute mien of a judge. But that which most of all added to our surprise and fright was the entrance of Pere Jacques, Walter and Mattoni into the square tower. All three were armed with muskets and placed themselves in silence before the door, where they stood with military precision while they received from the lips of Roulettable the order to let no person go out from the old chateau. Edith was overwhelmed with terror and demanded of Mattoni and Walter, both of whom were greatly attached to her what their presence signified and what their weapons threatened; but to my great astonishment, they returned no answer. Then the little woman rushed to the door which gave access to Old Bob's room, and, extending her two arms across the threshold as if to bar the passage, she cried:

"What are you going to do? You do not mean to kill him?" "No, madame," replied Roulettable gravely. "We are going to judge him. And in order to be sure that the judges shall not be executioners we are all going to swear upon the body of Pere Bernier after having laid down our arms that each of us will keep guard over himself."

And he led us into the chamber where Mere Bernier continued to groan beside the bier of her spouse. There we laid aside our revolvers and took the oath which Roulettable exacted.

The oath having been taken, Roulettable, with the Lady in Black still on his arm, went from the funeral

chamber into the corridor, but instead of directing our steps toward the apartment of Old Bob, as we expected him to do, he went straight to the door which afforded entrance to the chamber of "the body too heavy" and, drawing from his pocket the little special key of which I have spoken, he opened the door.

We were all astonished in entering the rooms which had been occupied by M. and Mme. Darzac to see upon M. Darzac's desk the drawing board, the wash drawing upon which our friend had worked at the side of Old Bob in the latter's workshop in the Court of the Bold and also the little dish full of red paint and the tiny brush drenched with the paint. And, lastly, in the middle of the desk there was placed, appearing very much at its ease, upon its bloody jaws, "the oldest skull of humanity."

Roulettable locked and bolted the door and said to us, himself greatly affected, while we listened with stupefaction:

"Sit down, if you please, ladies and gentlemen. "You will acknowledge," began Roulettable, "that there is here around this table one chair too many and in consequence one person too few—to particularize, M. Arthur Rance, for whom we cannot wait much longer."

"Perhaps at this very moment my husband possesses the proofs of Old Bob's innocence," observed Mme. Edith, whom all these preparations had disturbed more than any one else. "I entreat Mme. Darzac to join me in imploring these gentlemen to do nothing until Arthur's return."

The Lady in Black had no opportunity to intervene, for before Mme. Edith finished speaking we heard a loud noise outside the door of the corridor. A knock came at the door, and we heard the voice of Arthur Rance begging us to open immediately. He cried:

"I have brought the pin with the ruby bead!"

Roulettable opened the door.

"Arthur Rance, you are come then at last!" he exclaimed.

Edith's husband seemed plunged in the deep-at melancholy.

"What have you to tell me? What

FAITHFUL EMPLOYEE IS TIED TO TRACKS

Refusing to Give Combination of Safe to Robbers He is Left to Die—Aged Negro Saves Him.

VICKSBURG, Miss., Jan. 24.—Heroically refusing to reveal the combination of a safe to station robbers, George Burdette, a car tagger, was tied to the track and left to his fate, early today. Burdette was rescued from the path of an approaching train by an aged negro who narrowly escaped being run down by the locomotive. Burdette, in the employ of the Yazoo and Mississippi Valley railroad was alone in the station when two white men entered. He found himself looking into the muzzle of a revolver and was ordered to tell the combination of the safe. Threats failed to move the car tagger.

Angered at his refusal the thugs carried him to the track and tied him to the rails with his own belt, necktie and shirt. Burdette remained in his helpless condition for some time, knowing that meanwhile a train was due.

Frequently he cried for help and struggled to release himself. He became frantic, however, when he heard the rumble of an approaching train. The darkness began to diminish in the glare of an engine's headlight.

About that time, an old negro janitor arrived at the station. He heard the cries for help and began a search. Just before the train came up the negro found Burdette and dragged him from the track as the cars went by.

Although suffering from nervous collapse, Burdette was able to give the authorities a description of the men and they probably will be captured.

FRONT STREET IN UPROAR OVER WORMY APPLES

PORTLAND, Jan. 24.—Millard O. Lownsdale of the state board of horticulture has stirred up a hornet's nest along Front street that will likely result in an investigation of fruit inspection.

Yesterday afternoon Mr. Lownsdale condemned some apples consigned to Frank Templeton, a Front street commission man. Mr. Templeton claims that the fruit official has had a grudge against him since last summer when one of the men employed by the commission house "spoke back" to Mr. Lownsdale, not knowing that the latter was an official and had the power to condemn fruit.

While no defense is made by the commission house that the fruit condemned was sufficiently good to pass inspection, it is stated by others that some of the fruit "dilled" did not contain worms.

What really makes Front street sore at the action of the fruit official is that while condemning fruit of other growers, Mr. Lownsdale himself is the shipper of apples to the wholesale district that were wormy. Some Ben Davis apples displayed by Ben Levy & Co. in front of the commission house on Front street were wormy; this fact being attested to by former Fruit Inspector Baum, who was on the street this morning.

"I found a box of Mr. Lownsdale's apples when I was inspector," says Richard Deich, a former inspector, "but there was not enough of them to raise any row about."

It is the poor trashy apples that have hurt the prices for good fruit along Front street and an effort will be made hereafter to confiscate any undesirable fruit found in the wholesale district no matter to whom it belongs.

SCOTT AND PARTY TO GO AFTER SOUTH POLE

LONDON, Jan. 24.—That the British polar expedition to the Antarctic circle will remain away indefinitely was indicated by Captain Scott, head of the expedition, who is superintending preparations for his departure next July.

"If we fail to get to the south pole the first year," said Captain Scott, "and if we fail the second year we shall try the third. In fact, we shall jolly well stop there until the thing is done."

The English treasury department's announcement that parliament will be asked to vote \$100,000 in the expedition's aid removes the last vestige of financial difficulty and makes it absolutely certain that Captain Scott and his followers will have no trouble in getting away from England by the middle of July, as originally planned.

The explorers expect to have the completest and most modern equipment ever taken into the polar regions. Special attention will be devoted to the choice of photographic apparatus and wireless telegraph instruments.

EIFERT PRESIDES AS POLICE JUDGE NOW

During Absence of Mayor Canon W. Eifert Will Act as Police Judge With Recorder Telfer Associate.

The police court of this city is now presided over by an acting judge and an associate.

The amendment to the charter adopted at the late election making the mayor judge of the police court, and creating the office of police judge, necessitated the appointment of a judge pro tem, while the mayor was absent. Mr. Eifert, president of the council, naturally assumed the duties of the mayor. He insisted, however, in having an associate justice in the person of Recorder Telfer, and as a result violators of the peace and dignity of Medford now must face two judges instead of one.

The case Monday morning was that of T. J. Bordeaux, a minor, who had been guilty of disorderly conduct on the street. The accused plead guilty to the charge and Judge Eifert, after giving him some good advice, fined him \$20, which was paid.

IN MEDFORD TOWN.

(Air, "In Jungle Town.") Down in Medford town the boosters knocked a knocker down; Sore, he hit the floor; they drowned his road; there are no more. Boosters singing—cheers are ringing—Medford forward goes; Never slumping—ever jumping—how the city grows! Room for you, if you're true—come to Medford, too.

Chorus—Down in Medford town, where boosters boast, and never roost, Fifty thousand eager noses soon will smell our Medford roses. No dear old Medford will lead the coast, and loudly boast—Fifty thousand nineteen hundred twelve—way down in Medford town.

So-atte won't be an effigy of this city. Frisco'll have to kiss good-bye to this metropolis: 'Cross the river to Vancouver, send our overflow; Then fifty thousand right here will watch old Tacoma grow; Hear them sing, all will sing—Medford's the real, real thing.

Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Murphy of Eagle Point were in Medford Monday on business.

BOES ADOPT SLOGAN "NO MEAT FOR US"

International Amalgamation of Peripatetic Paupers Gather in Convention in Chicago.

CHICAGO, Ill., Jan. 24.—"No meat for us" is the motto of the International Amalgamation of Peripatetic Paupers who have gathered here today for a week's convention. Scores of delegates have motored here on the tracks of private box cars and many leading hoboes of the country are in attendance. The first day of the convention was taken up in the purely routine manner of getting various delegates out of the county jail and the city prisons in which they had been confined because of paralysis of the "labor" portion of the brain.

An executive committee meeting was called last night by J. Ends How, "The Millionaire Tramp," of St. Louis, chairman of the convention. The committeemen were just beginning their work when an unfortunate announcement of "coffee and sandwiches" caused a precipitate rush for the lunch counter.

It is said that among the matters to come before the meeting will be a resolution denouncing police departments of the country as "combinations" in restraint of their trade. A movement for the abolition of free lunch counters also will be denounced.

Notice.

The Medford Builders' Supply Co., having taken over the Day's planing mill plant, are now installing a drum sander, which added to the already large number of machines, will make this undoubtedly the best equipped mill in southern Oregon. They intend building a dry kiln in the near future which will insure perfectly dry lumber at all times. They will employ only first-class workmen. They will manufacture screens, mantels, grill work, all kinds of cabinet work, inside finish, doors, sash, etc. They invite an inspection of their mill and ask a chance to figure with you on your work. Shop at present corner Ninth and Fir streets, old stand of Day's Planing Mill.

MONEY MAKERS

Nice 5-room modern house, electric light, bath, four blocks from city park, for one week at \$2550.

One 5-room bungalow, completed February 15; modern conveniences; well located; two blocks from pavement; bargain at \$2200. \$1000 will handle it.

One 6-room house, electric lights, close to sewer, half block from Main. Good buy at \$1850.

LOTS OF LOTS—Reasonable prices.

Wright & Allin 128 East Main Street.

BENSON'S BARGAINS

120 acres in Sam's Valley, 16 miles from Medford, 9 miles from Gold Hill, 6 1/2 miles from Eagle Point; partly cleared, can all be plowed; less than 2 acres waste; we are offering this now at \$30 per acre for quick sale; terms.

40 acres, 16 miles north of Medford, 1/2 mile of Beagle; 8 acres cultivated, 4 acres in fruit trees from 2 to 10 years old; on 2 good county roads; small house, barn, woodshed, vegetable house, henhouse, 2 wells; this can all be easily cleared without a foot of waste land; 25 acres enclosed with woven wire fence. Price \$2100; terms.

Let us show you some of our 5 and 10-acre tracts; these tracts are at different stages of development, from raw land to bearing orchard. If some of these don't suit you, you are indeed hard to suit.

A ten-room house, south front, in desirable neighborhood, for \$2100 cash.

Also agents for the Sunny Butte orchard tracts of ten acres, Hopkins orchard.

LOTS OF LOTS.

Our firm owns 100 desirable residence lots. We are building houses in each of these additions. We will sell them on the installment plan. The average price of these lots is \$250. Easy payments, \$25 down and \$10 monthly. We anticipate raising the price of lots when a few more houses are completed. We do not believe in hot-air arguments to sell property. For your pocketbook's sake, take our tip. DO IT NOW.

We have recently moved to our new quarters over Fruitgrowers' bank, suite 205-206. Phone 541.

INSURANCE THAT INSURES.

We handle no other kind. Fire, Plate Glass, Automobile.

Benson Investment Company

FOR SALE

Residence, at 706 S. Oakdale avenue; house has eight rooms, besides pantry, closets, hall and bath; cement basement 32 feet square, tile drained. Lot 80x175. Cement sidewalk in front and to house. Private driveway. Alley in rear. For terms see on the property.

TUTTLE & SON

The Southern Oregon Hospital IS NOW READY TO RECEIVE PATIENTS. YOUR CO-OPERATION IS RESPECTFULLY INVITED. Visiting Hours 2 to 4 P. M. OFFICIAL HOSPITAL OF P. & E. RAILROAD. E. W. HISEY, Matron and Sole Proprietor. PHONE MAIN 1361. 334 S. CENTRAL AVE., MEDFORD, OR.

SOME GOOD BUYS

in Real Estate

- 16 acres Newtowns and Spitz apples, \$14,000 easy terms; just ready to bear.
360 acres 1-2 miles north of Eagle Point, \$18,000, easy terms.
10 acres Newtown and Spitz apples, 4-year-old trees; \$5000, easy terms.
200 acres south Eagle Point, \$10,000, easy terms.
Several nice small tracts near town just coming in bearing.
Also city property, nearly two acres, with good buildings, well located, modern improvements. Price \$5500.
Two lots, fine location, \$1500.
Several acre tracts, fine location to subdivide for lots for sale.

JACKSON COUNTY REALTY COMPANY 604 WEST TENTH STREET, OR 124 KING STREET. MEDFORD, OREGON