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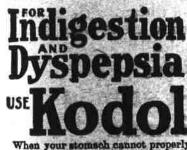
CHAPTER I-Robert Darzac nd Mlle. Stangerson celebrate their wedding quietly in a Paris shurch on April 6, 1895. Among the few present is Rouletabille, far as to have his coat removed, bereporter-detective, who has his doubts about the alleged death of Larsan, the government secret service official who is said to have been lost in the wreck of We Are Now Ready to have been lost in the wreck of La Dordogne. Mile. Stangerson had married him when she was a mere girl, ignorant that her Jan Roussel-his then name-was no other than the uotorious scoundrel Ballmeyer, now posing as Larsan. Rouletabille and his best П. friend, who is relating this story, d scide to go to the Castle of Hercules at Rochers Rouges to visit

the Rances together with the newly married Darzacs. Rouletabille is revealed as the son of the now Mme. Darzac and Larsan, her former husband. III-Darzac describes how his wife receives a severe shock at seeing the face of Larsan in a mirrow at a cailway compartment. IV, V



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MAGAZINB



Edith, more and more nervous, inkindliness when he was told that Old stalled herself as his nurse, but when Bob had been attempting to steal his the physicians came Old Bob ordered skull. his niece not only to leave his room, The prince asked for the details. He but to go out of the square tower alseemed very curious about the affair, and Mme. Edith told how her uncle

together. And he insisted that the door should be locked after her. had acknowledged to her that he had This last precaution was a great surquitted the Fort of Hercules by way prise to us all. We were assembled of the air shaft which communicated In the Court of the Bold, M. and Mme. with the sea. As soon as she said Darzac, Arthur Rance and myself, as this I recalled the experience of Ron well as Pere Bernler, who haunted my letabille with the flash of water and also the close iron bars, and the falsefootsteps, awaiting the news. When Mme, Edith quitted the tower after hoods which Old Bob had uttered assumed gigantic proportions in my the arrival of the medical men she mind, and I was sure that the rest of came to us and said: the party must hold the same opinion "Let us hope that his injuries won't be serious. Old Bob is solid as a rock. as myself. Mme. Edith told us that Tullio had been waiting with his boat

What did 1 tell you about him? 1 have made him confess, the old sinner! He was trying to steal Prince Galitch's skull, which he believed to be more ancient than his own-just the jealousy of one savant toward another. We shall all laugh at him when he is cured." and VI-Larsan is seen outside

At that moment the door of the the castle at Rochers Rouges, and equare tower opened, and Walter, Old Rouletabille establishes guards Bob's faithful servant, appeared. His and fortifies the place against face was pale, and he seemed very him. VII-Old Bob, a professor, pervous. exhibits what he describes as "the

oldest skull in the world". VIII is covered with blood! He doesn't and IX-Roulatabille traces Larwant anything to be said about it, but he must be saved." san and one Brignooles on a mys-Edith had already rushed into the terious journey. At a luncheon Roulatabille and his friend realsquare tower. As to us, we dared not utter a word. Soon the young woman ize the presence of Larsan at the returned. castle and are horrified. X-"Oh," she sobbed, "it is frightful!

Rouletabille calls his friends' at-His whole breast is torn open!" tention to the haunting odor of Rouletabille reached the castle about the perfume used by "the Lady an hour after these events. He cut in Black," Mme. Darzac. XI-A short my demands for an explanation and asked me immediately if I had the night. XII.-Darzac and Pere made a good catch.

"Oh, yes; a very good catch! I fished Bernier, a servant of Rance's in up Old Bob.' the dead of night are seen to car-He started violently. I shrugged my

G

ry off a quivering body in a bloody shoulders, for I believed that he was potato sack. Rouletabille admits counterfeiting surprise, and I went on: that he believes the body to be "Oh, you knew very well what kind that of Larsan. XIII. - Mme. of fish I should find when you sent Darzac tells how Larsan sprang your message!"

"You certainly must be unaware of

and how after a furious struggle Darzac killed Larsan. XIV.-Old Bob disappears. A stable boy appears with a bloody sack in which the body was carried

on the shaft to row the old savant to the bank in front of the grotto of Romeo and Juliet. "Why so many twists and furnings when it was so simple to go out by the gate?' I could not restrain myself from exclaiming. Mme. Edith looked at me reproachfully, and I regretted having even seemed to have taken part against her in any way. "And this is stranger yet," said the "Ob, Mme. Edith," he cried out, "he prince. "Day before yesterday the 'hangman of the sea' came to bld me adieu, saying that he was going to leave the country, and I am sure that he took the train for Venice, his na-

> tive city, at 5 o'clock in the afternoon. How then could he have conveyed your uncle in his boat late that night? In the first place, he was not in this part of the world; in the second, he

had sold his boat. He told me so, adding that he would never return to this country.' There was a dead silence, and passing into the unknown. It was

at the opening of the gallery abutting

Prince Galitch continued: "All this is of little importance, pro-

vided that your uncle, madame, recov- trying in vain to rise and who was at ers speedily from his injuries and the last gasp of his life. It was Beragain." he added, with another smile nier from whose breast flowed a more charming than those which had stream of blood and who, with one last preceded it, "if you will aid me in re- fearful struggle, summoned strength gaining a poor piece of flint which has enough to utter the two words "Freddisappeared from the grotto and of eric Larsan!"

him.

the purport of your words, my dear | which I will give you the description.

poor Bernier and around Mere Bernier. I looked at Mme. Edith. Beads of around the shaft, around each of us perspiration stood out on her fore-He moved about like a pig nos head, and her face was as pale as nourishment out of the mire, and we death. Edith led the way toward the postern gate. The vault of this all stood still, looking at him curiously and haif in sizem. Suddenly he started to his feet, almost white with postern formed a black arch in the light, and at the extremity of this tundust, and uttered a shout of triumph nel we perceived, facing us, Rouletaas though he had found Larsan himbille and Darzac, who were standing soif in the gravel. What new victory at the edge of the inner court like two did he feel that he had achieved over white statues. Rouletabille was holdthe mystery? ing in his hand Arthur Rance's ivory "It's all right, monsteur! Nothing headed cane. Motioning with the cane, is changed!" Attracted by the sound of voices, we he showed Darme momething on the summit of the vault which we could looked around and saw Pere Jacques not see, and then he pointed us out approaching, followed by two gen-

in the same way. We could not hear darmes. It was the brigndier of La what he said. The two talked togeth-Mortola, who, summoned by Prince er for a few moments with their lips Galitch, had hurried to the scene of scarcely moving, like two accou the or in some dark secret. Mme. Edith paused, but Rouletabille beckoned to What did Rouletabille mean by his "Nothing is changed" if not that deher, repeating the signal with his werything which we dreaded, which node as shudder and which we had cane

We went on until we rea vault, and the others watched us withno understanding of, continued just as out making a movement to meet us. before? We had come up close to them by this time, and they bade us turn The gen

ing the body and chattering over it in around with our backs toward the court so that we could see what they their incomprehensible jargon. The delegate would have power to begin the investigation, which would be conwere looking at. There was on top of the arch a stone, now loose, which seemed in imminent danger of failing and crushing the heads of the passershad been notified. by. Rouletabille asked Mme. Edith if he had any objections to its being pulled down until it could be replaced.

nore solidly "A good ides," she answered. Rouletabille handed the ivory headd cans to Darzac, asking him to per

form the feat of disidging the stone which was part of a carved escutches he shield of the Mortola. "You are taller than I." he went on

'See if you can reach it." Darzac seized the stick. He stretch d upward and struck with great vigor at the object, which clattered to the ground.

Suddenly behind me I heard the cry of a man in his dying agony. We turned with one impulse, ing an exclamation of horror. We all stood there, shivering, our

eyes wide with horror. Who was dead? What expiring breath had emitted that terrible sound? Rouletabille was the most terrified

of us all. Mattoni, who was passing through the garden and who had also beard the cry, rushed up. He hurried behind

mard. Mere Berbler was first quesioned, but little or nothing could be When we had passed the shade of gained from her testimony. She dethe eucalyptus we found the cause. slared that she knew nothing about The cry had come, indeed, from a soul anything. An exclamation from the delegat Bernier-Bernier, in whose throat sounded the death rattle, who was

the more and more inexplicable he nd the crime. He was on the point of finding it impossible that it should have been committed at all when it Then his head fell back, and he was same Mme. Edith's turn to be interro-

dead. Larsan always, forever. Here gated. yet again was his mark-a dead body Her lips opened to answer the first and no one anywhere near who could have committed the murder by any

question when Rouletsbille's voice was beard: ossibility of human reason. "Look at the end of the shadow of We rushed into the square tower, the door of which still stood open. We entered in a body the bedroom of

"What is it?" asked the delegato.

CAKE, hot bleer hot breads pastry, are essened in cos and increase in quality and wholesomeness, by 010 Baking Powder Bake the food at home NGPOW and save money and health IE

The delegato arrived. It was easily hand everything would be explained, to be seen that he was enchanted, and very simply. Pere Bernier uneven though he had not had the time doubtedly must have thus unfortuto finish his repast. A crime, actually nately fallen upon this triangular flint. s crime, and in the Chateau of Herwhich had pierced his heart. enles! He was fairly radiant. His eyes One of the physicians summoned to shone. The delegato examined the care for Old Bob was called, and he wound and said in very good English:

ing its

farmes were busy examin-

ed when the examining magistrate

decided that Bernier's fatal wound "That was a magnificent stroke!" was caused by the flint. "And now how did all this happen?" As to Mme. Edith and myself, after he asked encouragingly, smacking his some futile and useless questions, asklips as though in the anticipation of ed while the doctors were at the bedsearing a story of thrilling interest. side of Old Bob, we were allowed to "It is terrible," he added--"terrible!

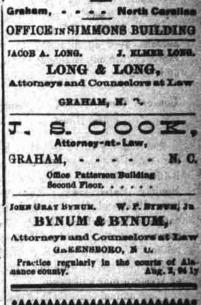
leave the room, and we went to sit in In the five years that I have been the little parlor just outside the beddelegato we have never had a murder room and were there when the magissieur, the examining magistrate"trates were ready to depart. here he checked himself, but we knew Edith suddenly seized me by the well what he had been on the point of

hand and cried out: saying--"monsieur, the examining mag-istrate will be very much pleased." He wiped the perspiration from his fore-"Do not leave me! I beg of you don't leave me! I have only you left. head and repeated. "It is terrible!" I do not know where Prince Galitch is-I do not know anything about my At the request of the delegato we husband. That is what makes this so all entered the square tower. We took our places in Old Bob's sitting horrible. Arthur sent me a message saying that he was going in search of room, where the inquest was to be held and where each of us in turu Tullio. He does not know even yet that Beruler has been murdered. Has acounted what he had seen and 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 confidingly and held it for a moment in her own struck upon our ears. The farther the evidence of the witnesses pro-gressed the greater became the amagement of the commissioner and I felt that I was for Mme. Edith with II my heart and soul, and I assured her that she might rely upon my devotion.

Rouletabille never failed to cast giance is our direction every time he had the opportunity. "Ah, he is watching us!" exclaimed

Mme. Edith. "You ought to be grateful to Rouletabille." I ventured to remind her. "for his intervention and his slience relative to the 'oldest knife known to the human race.' If the officers had learned that this stone dagger be longed to your uncle Bob, what could have hindered them from placing him



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CHAPTER XVI. A Living Tomb and a Baffling

into the apartment of herself and

her husband from behind a panel

Murder.

ARE YOU ONE Y thoughts turned to Rouleta-bille. What was he defe of the many thousands who want to explore this Won-derland 7 2 7 7 Why had he gone away? As I 11 lay there puzzling my brain over the outcome of the affair I heard SUNSBT . some one knocking at my door. It was Pere Bernier, who brought me a brief note from my friend which had been handed to Pere Jacques by a little lad instituted a new from the village. Rouletabille wrote: Sample Copy, 11 10 11 12 11 11

This communication gave me more food for thought, for I knew by experience that whenever Rouletabille seemed most occupied with trivial matters his activity was really most thoroughly engaged with important sub-

jects. I dressed myself in haste, provided Electric myself with some old tackle which was furnished me by Bernier and set out to obey the request of my young friend. As I went out of the north gate, having encountered nobody at that early hour of the morning (it was about 7 o'clock), I was joined by Mme. an everything clas fails, prostration and ispale they are the supreme thousands have testified Edith, to whom I showed what Rouletabille had written. The young woman was greatly dejected over the un-FOR KIDNEY, LIVER AND STOMACH TROUBLE explained absence of her uncle, remarked that the letter was "so queer that it made her nervous," and she informed me that she intended to follow

me to the trout streams. We started to fish for Rouletabille's trout. Mrs. Bance and I both removed our shoes and stockings, but I concerned myself more about the dainty bare feet of my pretty hostess than about my own. She clambered into TENTS the pools and crept among the rocks with a grace which enchanted me more than I dared express. Suddenly we

ADE MARES We heard cries from the shore where the grottoes are. We distinguished a Tage little group, the persons in which were making gestures of appeal. We hastily rushed to the beach, and in a few seclic American.

attentite Bestite internet fin less for several bours. The quick conjecture which rushed into both our minds at once proved to

SC YEARS'



11

SELVES IN SILENCE BEFORE THE DOOR.

spared me the trouble of protesting against such an accusation." "What accusation?" I cried.

"That of having left Old Bob in the grotto of Romeo and Juliet, knowing

that he might be dying there." "Oh, nonsense?" I cried. "Old Bob s far from dying. He has a sprained, foot and a broken collar bone, and his story of his misfortune is perfectly plain and straightforward. He declares that he was trying to stenl Prince Galitch's skull." "What a funny Meal" exclaimed

both desisted from our task and prick-Rouletabille. ed up our ears at the same moment. in the breast."

onds we learned that, attracted by moans, two fishermen had just discovered in a cave in the grotto of Romeo and Juliet an unfortunate human being who had fallen into the chasm and who must have been there help-



ALL THREE WERE ARMED WITH MUSKETS AND PLACED THEM

Sainclair, or else you would have It is a sharp piece of flut twenty-five

be able to learn, madame, through your Uncle Bob what has become of it."

Mme. Edith at once gave her pro ise to the prince, with a certain air of haughtiness which pleased me greatly, that she would do everything p to obtain for him news of so precio an object. The prince left us. When we had finished returning his parting salutes we naw Rance before us. He seemed very thoughtful. He had his ivory headed cane in his hand and was whistling, according to his babit, and he looked at Mme Edith with a

strange expression. "I know exactly what you are think-ing, sir," she said, "and you may keep

was outside the square tower he could have hidden behied that panel." "Madame," said Rouletabile im-pressively, looking at her as though he were trying to hypnotine her, "if God is with me, before night I shall explain to you all that you wish to know." A little later I found myself in the

Old Bob, passing through the empty sitting room. The injured man was lying quietly on his bed within, and near him a woman was watching-Mere Bernier. Both were as caim and still as the day itself, but when the

wife of the dead concience saw our faces she uttered a cry of allright, as though smilles by the inowiedge of some calentity. She had beard nothing: she knew nothing. But she su ed into the nir like a streak of light-ning and want straight, as though im-pelled by some hilden through directly

Galitch, but there was no doubt in the mind of any one of us that it had been stolen by Old to the place where the body was lit-And now R was her groans that counded on the sir under grouns that yun of the Midl over the bleeding lorpes. We tore the shirt from the dead man's breast and found a gaping wound just above the baset. Bob, and we could not forget that with his intest breath Bernier had ac-sueed Larson of being his assault. Never had the image of Old Bob and that of Larass been so instrictby confounded in our restless spirits an since Nouletabilie had found "the old-We looked for the warpon every-where without finding it. The man who had struck the blow had carried ast dagger known to the human race" dripping with the blood of Bernier. Mms. Edith had at once realized that beneaforth the fate of Old Bob iny in the hands of Rouletabilis. And therethe knife away. Where was the man? Who was hot What we did not know Who was not wont wont of the the died, Bernier had incown before he died, and it was perfuse because of thet knowledge that his life had been for-fore Mass. Edits, who in her flial af-fortied. "Frederic Largent" We re-fetted may he hay on his bed in the such and trembling. Suddenly on the threshold of the bloody warmon that the thanks to the the man who lay on his bed in the peated the last words of the dying man in fear and trembling. postern we saw. Prince Galitch, a bloody weapon; that the invisible Lar-newspaper in his hand. He was read-

ing as he came toward us. His air that it could scarcely be broken with was jovial, and his flice wore a smille. But Mme. Edith rushed up to him, the design doubliess of making the old man suffer the pushshment for the wretch's own crimes and also the snatched the paper from his hands, inted to the corpse and cried out: dangerous weight of his personality. Mms. Edith trembled for Old Bob and "A man has been murd for the police?" The prince turned away from the And th

And the incriminating fact remained ody, stating that he would send for that there had been nothing anywhere around the corpse of Bernier but the stone knife which Old Bob had stolen! the authorities. le was examining the bare and heavy lid whith closed the shaft; but his manner was distrait and discouraged. Turning, ence more She read the certainty of this con riction in the eyes and in the mann of Roulerabilie and of Darmac. But sits understood as soon as the young man began speaking that he seemed to have no other end in view than to save Oid Bob from the suspicions of the scithering. nes, he said in the sai to his hos "And what will you tall the when they get here?"

"Everything!" "Everything!" Mrs. Rance fairly sumpped out the word between her tasth, her ages fashing fra. He seemed uttarty at-hamsted and vangulabed. M. Durine wanted to search through the square tower, the Tower of the Sold, the new marks all the dependencies of the the sutborities. Reuletabilie in giving his eviden proved with a logical accuracy that everytheimed the examining maga-trate and plunged the delegato into despate that the deed could only have been committed by the dead man himself. The four persons at the posterni gate and the two persons in the been could be the been been tower, the Tower of the Bold, the new castle, all the dependencies of the fort from which as one could have made his escape and where, therefore, the semantic must still be concented. The reporter shock his hand dreamly and said that it would be af no use. Rouletshills and I knew only too well that any search would be in vals. He not I had learned that there was no mer. Old Bub's room had each been look-ing at the others and had not lost sight of each other while some one was killing Bertiler a few steps away, not if was immediate to believe that to tooking for Larsen with one's eyes. To see clearly it was better to all

his memori. And when he opened them he was another mail. A new energy salimate his features. He stood event as thong he had thrown off a weight. H clinched his fait and raised it towner

He threw Mmasif on the crooping on his hands and in news to the carth, like a bound ing the event, gains round the

"Ohl" she cried bitterly. "Your was committed?"

CHAPTER XVII.

The Return of Arthur Rance

keep silence as I have, and I dread friend has as m: good reasons to Reuletabilis jumped into the court and picked up from the bloody stones only one thing, M. Sainclair-1 dread a sharp, shining piece of fint. It was only one thing." "And what is that?" "the oldest dagger of the human

"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 Hit weapon belonged to Prince 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 anwered, with a sigh, passing my hand cross my forehead.

"Very well; I believe you," she swered. "In that case I will leave you here for a few minutes. You will ruard 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 Rouletabille and M. Darmac entered the room. They had beard all that had passed. Rouletabilie advanced to my side and told me quietly that he was aware that I had betrayed him.

"You are using a large word, Rouletabilie!" I excinimed. "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 mough, my friend."

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

UP "I ask you only one thing-only one, we understand. It is that, no matter what may happen-no matter what may happen-you shall not address one word to either M. Darsac or to my

[CONTINUED.]

Promise Some people spend half their lives in making promises and the other half in breaking them.

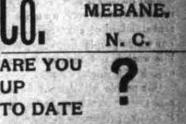
Making a Pon Before it is completed a common pen workers. The Russian Army.

possible to believe that

In the Russian army the death rate such year is almost equalled by the ber of desertions.

se if was impossible to believe that the killing could have been done by any other than the victim. To this the examing magistrata, gractly interested, replied by inquir-ing whether any of us had reason to respect any autive for unicide on the part of Bernier, to which Routetabille anereseed that the reppention of atl-cide might easily be inid athe and that of socident substituted for it. The stane, which anight have attract-ed his attraction by its stratege form, might have been picked up by Fern Bernier, and if he had happened to othe and fail while holding it in his number of deservices. They All Change. Mrs. Youngiovs-Ob, desri Such is iffet Beföre we got married George was tagging around after me all the time. I couldn't get away from him. for a minute. That was a year ago. Her Dearest Friend - Poor childl What has the wretch done? "He mid last night that he throught wid move next month to some place where he can have a don so as to get be himself once in swhile."

self once in awhile."



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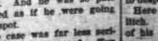
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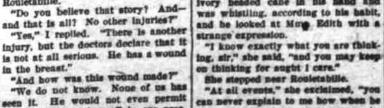
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his cost to be taken off in our pres-As soon as we came to the chateau we encountered Mme. Edith, who sp-peared to have been watching for us.

The second s

"My uncle won't have me near him," she said, regarding Rouletabille

had been drawn up on the beach is the full light of day he certainly presented a pitiable speciale. His beautiful black coat was torn and cov-ored with mud, and his white shirr was as black as tar. Mme. Edith barst into tears and nearly went into hysterics when she found that the oid man had a broken collia bone and a sprained foot. And he was so pair that be looked as if he were going to die on the spot. Happily the case was far less seri-ous than it at first appeared. Ten

centimeters long and shaped at one end to the form of a dagger-in brief, the oldest dagger of the buman race. I value it greatly, and perhaps you may