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## Dr. King's New Discovery

# The Perfume of the Lady in Black

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

The gripping qualities of this story reveal a gifted French author in his best vein. While it is a detective story ranking with the Sherlock Holmes series, revealing further adventures of Rouletabille, the sensational solver of mysteries, the narrative also presents several character studies of engrossing interest—Rouletabille, the bewildering hero of "The Mystery of the Yellow Room," who is here confronted with the nerve-racking mystery of "the body too many," Larsen, the fugitive from justice and master mind of the polished criminals of two hemispheres, who reveals himself only when he wishes to show where he is not, and the Lady in Black, whose inspiring faith is unshaken by the unspeakable tragedies in which she is the central figure. The dreadful power for evil that can be exerted by a perverted brain has never been more clearly portrayed. The heart-breaking test of the unfortunate son who realizes that he must kill his father, who has never known his son, to save his mother, whom he might never see again, is a vivid portrayal of some of the penalties of human existence.

### CHAPTER I. A Foredoomed Marriage.

THE marriage of M. Robert Darzac and Mlle. Mathilde Stangeron took place in Paris at the Church of St. Nicholas du Chardonnet on April 6, 1885, everything conducted in the quietest fashion possible. A little more than two years had rolled by since the events which I have recorded in a previous volume—events so sensational that it is not surprising too strongly to say that an even longer lapse of time would not have sufficed to blot out the memory of the famous "Mystery of the Yellow Room."

In this almost unknown parish it was easy enough to maintain the utmost privacy. Only a few friends of M. Darzac and Professor Stangeron, on whose discretion they felt assured that they might rely, had been invited. I had the honor to be one of the number.

I reached the church early, and naturally my first thought was to look upon Joseph Rouletabille. I was somewhat surprised at not seeing him; but, having no doubt that he would arrive shortly, I entered the pew already occupied by M. Henri-Robert and M. Andre Hesse, who in the quiet shades of the little chapel exchanged in undertone reminiscences of the strange affair at Versailles, which the approaching ceremony brought to their memories.

"I never felt quite easy about Robert and Mathilde," he said, "not even after the happy termination of the affair at Versailles," said Henri-Robert, "until I knew that the information of the death of Frederic Larsen had been officially confirmed. That man was a pitiless enemy."

It will be remembered perhaps by readers of "The Mystery of the Yellow Room" that a few months after the acquittal of the professor in Sorbonne there occurred the terrible catastrophe of La Dordogne, a transatlantic steamer running between Havre and New York. In the broiling heat of a summer night upon the coast of the new world La Dordogne had caught fire from an overheated boiler. Before help could reach her the steamer was utterly destroyed. Scarcely thirty passengers were able to escape into the life boats, and these were picked up the next day by a merchant vessel, which conveyed them to the nearest port. For days thereafter the corpses, and among these they found Larsen.

four days. Then he had directed the man to bring the bag in about an hour to the hotel in the "Bouff Mich."

"I made one bound up the stairs to my friend's bedroom," where I found him packing in a tiny hand satchel an assortment of toilet articles, a change of linen and a nightshirt. This task was ended I could obtain no further information from Rouletabille, for in regard to the little affair of everyday life he was extremely particular and despite the modesty of his means succeeded in living very well, having a horror of everything which could be called bohemian. He finally deigned to announce to me that "we were going to take our Easter vacation" and that since I had nothing to do the Epoch had granted him a three days' holiday we couldn't do better than to go and take a short rest at the seaside. But my silence did not disturb Rouletabille in the least, and taking my value in one hand, his satchel in the other, he hustled me down the stairs and pushed me into a hack which awaited us before the door of the hotel. Half an hour later we found ourselves in a first class carriage of the Northern railway, which was carrying us toward Tropez by way of Avignon. As we entered the station he said:

"Why don't you give me the letter that you have for me?" I gazed at him in amazement. He had guessed that Mme. Darzac would be greatly grieved at not seeing him before her departure and would write to him. He had been positively malicious, I answered.

"Because you don't deserve it." And I gave him a good scolding, to which he interposed no defense. He did not even try to excuse himself, and that made me angrier than ever. Finally I handed him the letter. He took it, looked at it and inhaled its fragrance. As I sat looking at him curiously he frowned, trying, I thought, to suppress some strong feeling. His face betrayed the fact that he was suffering profoundly.

"Well? I said, "Aren't you going to read the letter?" "No," he replied; "not here; when we are younger."

We arrived at Tropez in the blackest night that I remember after six hours of an interminable trip and in wretched weather. The wind from the sea chilled us to the bone of the Rances at a kind of quay with weird sounds of lamentation. I walked behind Rouletabille, who made his way with difficulty in this damp obscurity. However, he appeared to know the place, for we finally arrived at the door of a queer little inn which remained open during the early spring for the fishermen. Rouletabille demanded supper and a fire, for we were half starved and half frozen.

"Ab, now, my friend," I said when we were settled after a fashion, "will you condescend to explain to me what we have to come to look for in this place aside from rheumatism and pneumonia?" But Rouletabille at this moment coughed and turned toward the fire to warm his hands again.

"Oh, yes," he answered; "I am going to tell you. We have come to look for the perfume of the Lady in Black." This phrase gave me so much to think about that I scarcely slept at all that night.

Early in the morning I was awakened by a changed Rouletabille. His face was distorted with grief as he handed me a telegram which had come to him at the Bourg, having been forwarded from Paris in accordance with the orders that he had left. There is the dispatch:

## Thousands Have Kidney Trouble and Never Suspect It.

Fill a bottle or common glass with your water and let it stand twenty-four hours; a trick of this kind, or settling, stringy or milky appearance often indicates an unhealthy condition of the kidneys; too frequent desire to pass urine or pain in the back are also symptoms that tell you the kidneys and bladder are out of order and need attention.

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What To Do. There is comfort in the knowledge so often expressed, that Dr. Kilmor's Swamp-Root, the great kidney remedy, fulfills almost every wish in correcting rheumatism, pain in the back, kidneys, liver, bladder and every part of the urinary passage. Corrects inability to hold water, and scalding pain in passing it, or bad effects following use of liquor, wine or beer, and overcomes that unpleasant necessity of being compelled to go often through the day, and to get up many times during the night. The mild and immediate effect of Swamp-Root is soon realized. It stands the highest test of its remarkable health restoring properties. If you need a medicine you should have the best. Sold by druggists at fifty-cent and one-dollar sizes.

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