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The Perfume of the Lady in Black

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

CHAPTER I—Robert Darzac and Mlle. Stangerson celebrate their wedding quietly in a Paris church on April 6, 1895. Among the few present is Roulettable, the reporter-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 La Dordogne.

CHAPTER VII A Keen Rogue and a Quaint Crank.

AN hour later we were all at our post, passing along the parapets in the moonlight, keeping close watch. Mue, Edith, who said that she could not sleep, came out and talked to Roulettable in his postern. He called me, placed me in charge of his postern and of Mrs. Rance and under his rounds. The fair Edith was in the most charming humor.



"HERE IT IS, IT IS OLD BOB'S SKULL. LOOK AT IT!"

"You see, these people believe that I am fortifying the place to defend myself. Well, that is merely a small part of the truth, for I am fortifying the place because reason bids me do so in order that Larsan cannot get in."

claimed: "That is an infernal lie! The oldest skull in all history is Old Bob's skull. Do you understand me? It is Old Bob's skull!"

CHAPTER VIII Wonderful Finds—and Vanishings.

OLD BOB took up the frightful object and began to caress it, his eyes sparkling and his thick lips parting once more in a broad smile.



I COULD PERCEIVE TWO FORMS THAT HASTENED.

"When one looks at the skull from above one notices very clearly a pentagonal formation which is due to the shape of the frontal bone and the jutting out of the shell of the occipitals. The great breadth of the face comes from the exaggerated development of the zygomatic proportions, while in the head of the troglodytes of the Baoussa-Baoussa what do we find?"

"I shall never know what it was that Old Bob found in the head of the troglodytes, for I did not listen to him, but I looked at him. And I had no further inclination for laughter. Old Bob seemed to me terrifying, horrible, as false as the father of lies, with his counterfeit gaiety and his scientific jargon. My eyes remained fixed upon him as if they were fascinated. It seemed to me that I could see his hair move, just as a wig might move, while the thought of Larsan, which never left me completely, seemed to expand until it filled my entire brain. I felt as if I must speak it out when all at once I felt an arm locked in mine, and I saw Roulettable looking at me with an expression which I did not know how to read."

"You are in the right in seeing him everywhere around us. If he were not there a little while ago he is perhaps there now. Ah, he is stronger than the stones! He is stronger than anything else in the world. I fear him less within than without, for, since I feel that he is here."

"I was not in much of a hurry to open the dispatch which Pere Jacques had brought me, and in this I was wrong, for as soon as I cast my eyes over the words which it contained I realized that it was of the deepest importance. My friend at Paris, whom I had requested to keep an eye upon Brignolles, sent me word that the said Brignolles had left Paris for the evening before for the Midi. He had taken the 10.55 train. My friend informed me that he had reason to believe that Brignolles had taken a ticket for Nice."

Do You Get Up With a Lame Back?

Almost everyone knows of Dr. Kilmor's Swamp-Root, the great kidney, liver and bladder remedy, because of its remarkable health restoring properties.

Two hours later I re-entered the Fort of Hercules and told my story to Roulettable, who placed the bit of paper in his portfolio and entreated me to be as silent as the grave in regard to my expedition.

"Astounded at having produced so different an effect from the one which I had anticipated at the discovery which I believed so important, I started at Roulettable. He turned his head away. His eyes were filled with tears. 'Roulettable!' I exclaimed. But again he motioned me not to speak. They had waited dinner for me. It was late. We scarcely attempted to hide the deep anxiety which froze our hearts. One would have said that each one of us was resigned to the blow which was threatening. At 10 o'clock I went to take up my station at the tower of the gardener. While I was in the little room where we had consulted together the night before the Lady in Black and Roulettable paced beneath the arch. The glimmer of the lantern fell on their faces. Mrs. Darzac was greatly excited. She was urging Roulettable to something which I could not hear. The conversation between them looked like an argument, and I caught only one word of Roulettable's, 'This!'

Remember Headaches

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