

"TO LET LANTELME LIE EASY IN HER GRAVE"

Paris Greatly Perplexed Over the Motive of "Bluebeard" Edwards in Leaving All His Millions to a Beautiful Young Actress Who Had Been His Wife's Best Friend



Mlle. Colonna Romano, to Whom M. Edwards Left His Millions.

Paris, April 11.
THE mystery of the death of lovely Lucie Lantelme, found drowned in the River Rhine after a long night of gaiety, continues to breed new mysteries. Alfred Charles Edwards, Lantelme's husband, millionaire, founder of the Paris Matin and other publications, has left a will naming a beautiful young actress, Mlle. Gabrielle Colonna Romano, of the Theatre Francais, as his universal legatee.

Mlle. Colonna Romano is said to have been a great friend of Lantelme, whose mysterious death gave rise to the most injurious reports concerning her husband, reports that led him to bring an action for libel against one Paris newspaper.

The words of the will leaving his property to Mlle. Colonna Romano are peculiar. They are as follows: "I appoint as my universal legatee Mlle. Gabrielle Colonna Romano, my friend, who I affirm on my honor has never been anything but my friend in the highest and most immaterial sense of the word."

The will then goes on to specify various payments and pensions which Edwards wishes her to make out of his estate.

The young actress made a brief and enigmatical comment on the will: "I am pained at the bequest which has been thrust upon me. I know I shall be the object of horrible calumnies. I am uncertain what to do. Unless I accept the charge Edwards has placed upon me his first wife will not receive her pension and

various trusting persons will lose the payments he desires me to make to them, for the estate will go to distant relatives."

From these words and certain other circumstances Paris has constructed a new version of the Lantelme tragedy. This theory is that Edwards was tortured by remorse over the death of his beautiful young wife, and that to make the only amends in his power he has left his wealth and the jewels he had given her to her most intimate friend, who at one time expressed the greatest aversion for him.

Lucie Lantelme was exquisitely beautiful, and the most exquisite feature of her beauty lay in her deep, dark, sad, wistful eyes. "The haunting eyes of Lantelme" they were commonly called in Paris. It is said that Edwards, in his last days, when he realized that death was about to take him, exclaimed: "Those eyes! Wherever I go I

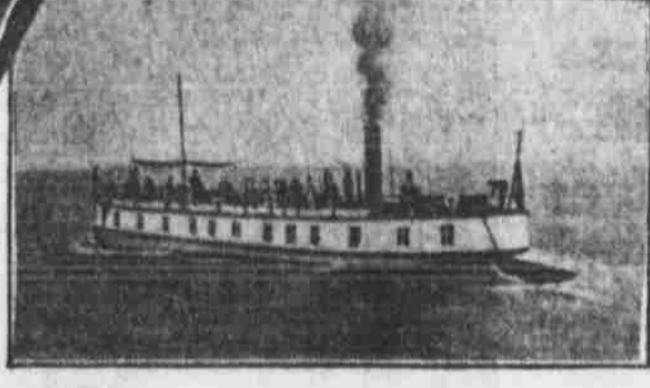
see them, the wistful, the glorious eyes of my dead wife. They urge me to do something, but I do not yet know what . . ."

The current explanation then is that the only reparation the dying man could imagine was to leave her jewels and his wealth to her friend.

In order to understand this situation it is necessary to recall the earlier events of Alfred Edwards' career. He was of mixed English, French and Hebrew descent, but in his true personality he was a typical Parisian. Years ago he founded the Matin, a French newspaper, conducted on American lines, and made a great fortune with it. His activities were Napoleonic, and newspaper work formed but a small part of them.

He was married so frequently that Parisians often referred to him without ill-feeling as "Bluebeard." Before he married Lantelme he had had

The Haunting Eyes of Lantelme.
 "Wherever I go I see them—the wistful, the glorious eyes of my dead wife. They urge me to do something—but what I do not yet know."—Parisian Millionaire Edwards Before His Death.



The Houseboat from Which Lantelme, the Beautiful Parisienne, So Mysteriously Drowned.

four wives. She, his fifth wife, is widely regarded as the most beautiful woman who ever appeared on the French stage.

She was the daughter of a Paris concierge and rose within a few months of her debut to a position of wealth and universal adoration. She was only twenty when she married Edwards.

On July 24, 1911, when she was only twenty-three years old and at the summit of her beauty and fame, she was drowned mysteriously in the river Rhine. She had gone there in a large houseboat, the Aimee, belonging to her husband, with a gay party of their friends. He excused himself early in the evening and went to his cabin.

After a night of singing and dancing, in which much champagne was consumed, Lantelme retired to her own room and bolted the door. A short time later, after 1 a. m., the guests on the boat were aroused by a woman's cry and the shouts of Edwards, who had broken in his wife's door.

Lantelme had disappeared from the boat. Her body was not recovered until daylight. Many circumstances surrounding her death were mysterious and others were shocking. Her delicate body, clothed only in a night garment, was kept tied by a rope to the stern of the boat for twenty-four hours, until the Prussian authorities could perform an autopsy.

At this time many conflicting reports were sent to Paris, and as the result of one of them Edwards brought his libel suit. At this for the first time Edwards and other witnesses gave their account of the tragedy.

Upon what is known as the Three Mysteries of the Cabin there was much conflicting testimony. What did actually happen there in Lantelme's boudoir on the Aimee that night? Not from the trial nor the previous inquests can the riddle be answered. Perhaps it will never be known. One can but tell what was recited before the French courts.

These three mysteries can be at-

tributed as the Mystery of the Broken Door, the Mystery of the Broken Window Pane and the Mystery of the Cry.

It would appear that it had never been the custom during the journeys of the Aimee to anchor in midstream. The houseboat-yacht was always anchored close to the riverside and in close proximity to some village or town. Mme. Lantelme was afraid of the water at night! She liked always to be near land. M. Edwards said that he had never before done such a thing in all his twenty years of river yachting. But this night, because of the oppressive heat, the Aimee was brought to in mid-Rhine.

The Aimee had been designed for comfort. She was not particularly ornamental on the outside. Inside she was a palace. She had wide windows, instead of portholes. Lantelme's private bedroom was on the starboard. It was from the open window of this room that she is supposed to have made her way, in one of four manners, into the river.

The first story in the Paris newspapers, apparently authoritative, told how M. Edwards and Lantelme and a small party of their friends left Paris on the Aimee, and on the night of the death had sat up until 1 o'clock. There had been much champagne, and Lantelme had sung spiritedly for the guests. M. Edwards had excused himself early and had gone into his cabin to write, as he said, some letters. More than an hour afterward the guests had been aroused by a cry from Edwards. They had rushed out of their staterooms and had found M. Edwards in front of Lantelme's door. He told them that he had been in bed and that the beauty had gone into her room, as was her custom; that later he had felt something was wrong. He had gone to the door of her room and had knocked. Getting no answer, he had called to her. Growing more alarmed, he had shouted, and it was these shouts that had brought the other occupants of the yacht from their staterooms.

All agreed that they had then broken open the door. They had found the window in Lantelme's room wide open, but no sign of Lantelme! There were no marks, according to them, of any struggle. Every article in the room was in order. They had looked out into the racing river, but had seen nothing, and they had heard no cries. When they looked back into the room again M. Edwards was lying on the floor in a faint. They had immediately lowered the small boats and searched, but they had found nothing.

Then a second story crept out. This was that the guests had heard a woman's cry. They had gone to Edwards' room and had aroused him. He said that he had heard no cry. All had then knocked at Mme. Lantelme's door. Getting no answer, they had broken in the door. At this point the story ran on as in the first one told.

As a result of this trial Edwards obtained a verdict with nominal damages, but it left the mystery deeper than ever. In view of the verdict and other circumstances it seemed unreasonable and unjust to suspect Edwards of being the direct source of his wife's death, but rumors directed against him became stronger than ever.

An actor who had known Lantelme well declared that she had told him that her husband had threatened to shoot her dozens of times, and that he made her life miserable. Everybody then recalled how hopelessly sad the beautiful girl always appeared to be.

"Could it be," the curious Parisians asked themselves, "that the husband, this man of many wives, was possessed of some strange mania that made his wife's life unendurable?"

This discussion was still going on when, in January, 1912, barely six months after Lantelme's death, her grave in Pere La Chaise Cemetery was broken open. The thieves had made their way to her particular resting place in the large family vault. They had rifled her coffin, in which she lay with her jewels, including her famous \$60,000 pearl necklace, beneath her head.

They had scattered the contents



The Late Madame Lantelme Wearing the \$60,000 Rope of Pearls Which Were Stolen from Her Tomb.

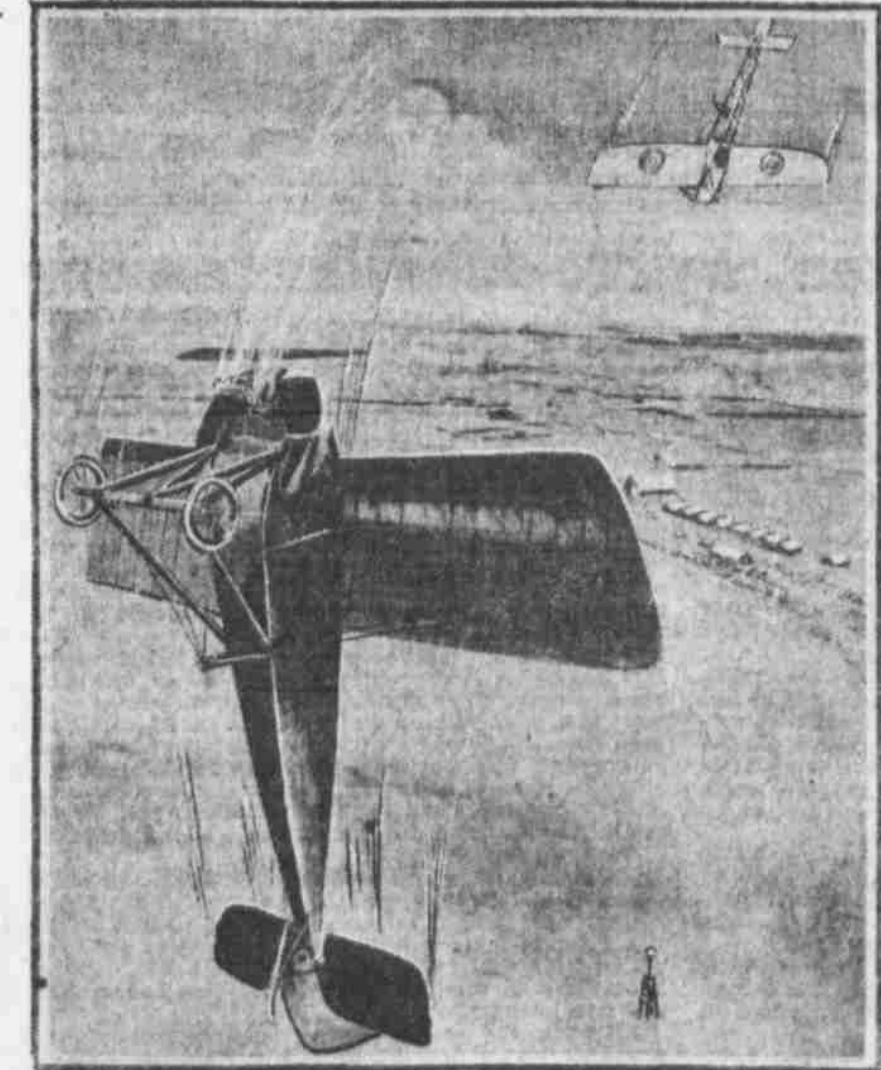
of the tomb about the vault. The ghouls had fought furiously together, and splashes of their blood marked a trail lasting for hundreds of yards away from the tomb. The mystery of this fight was never solved.

A month later it was reported that the jewels of Lantelme, including the \$60,000 pearl necklace, had been returned to M. Edwards. The mystery of their return was never solved.

After that it was twice reported that the veteran Bluebeard was about to wed a young actress. In each case she was one of the loveliest stars of her profession. Paris confidently awaited the wedding twice, and in each case it was disappointed. In neither case was the expected bride Mlle. Colonna Romano.

Then, in March last, M. Edwards himself died. And after his death the mysteries of his life excite more interest than ever.

Mimicking Death's Own Tricks to Make the Air Safe



A Remarkable Picture of Aviators Practising the Tail Drop and Upside-Down Flying to Be Able to Cope with Such Conditions When Met Unexpectedly.

HERE is an extraordinary picture of two of the newest, most astonishing and perilous feats of aviators. The aeroplane shown dropping swiftly in the foreground is not falling helplessly. It is dashing to ground as swiftly as gravitation can carry it, but the aviator, John Nielson, expects to regain control of it before it reaches earth's surface, where, unless he does gain control, he will be dashed to certain death.

In the other aeroplane in the picture Pogoud, the French aviator, is seen flying head downward, not because his aeroplane has turned turtle, but because he desires to test flying in that way.

Neither of these men are doing their dangerous acts for amusement or to thrill onlookers. The purpose is to make flying immune from the sudden horrible death that takes increasing toll of their ranks, by imitating all death's tricks and so discovering how to beat them.

Pogoud, in a remarkable interview recently, thus explained the principle: "You cannot really learn how to beat a game until you have passed through that game," he said. "For those who fly through the air death has up his sleeve a multitude of tricks, for which the penalty of not knowing is extinction or crippling. A sideways veer, a sudden dropping—a hundred things may cause the fatal fall. But Death's great card is the unexpectedness with which he plays his tricks."

"Many of the things that have caused tragedies have been things that could only have been rehearsed once or twice, would not have been dangerous at all."

"Therefore, a few of us have

said, 'We will rehearse these tricks of death' so we may know and tell how to meet them when they come not of our own volition. For this we risk our lives in upside-down flying, in the vertical tail drop, and so on. But we eliminate the element of the unexpected. It is true that we may be killed doing these things, but we have not yet been killed—those of us who are learning to play Death's own game."

"For instance, there is my feat of flying a mile upside down. I have so learned to master the planes under such conditions that if unexpectedly I should turn turtle I should still know how to keep control and save my life. It is the elimination of the tiny movement between the time the unexpected happens and the time in which the aviator grasps the situation that we strive to eliminate. For that tiny movement is the difference between life and death."

The tail drop, shown here, is even more dangerous than the upside down flight. The aviator gets into position by a series of short "hosing up" flights. Gradually his aeroplane assumes the vertical. When it does so it is simply let to drop like a stone. Equilibrium is regained by what is known as a back volplane. That is, the rudder planes are so moved that the drop of the machine is changed into an abrupt arc. If this arc is not too abrupt the aviator regains control. If it is too sharp the plane strikes the earth with sufficient force to destroy it and most probably its driver.

This tail end dropping is one of the commonest causes of fatal accident in flying. Sudden heavy gusts of wind that cause the up-tilting are frequently met with.