

The Sable Lorcha
— BY —
Hervae Hazeltine

"Peter Johnson!" she repeated, slowly. "So, I was right. He was in the plot. He had something to do with Uncle Robert's disappearance. He was the one who broke the amyl pearls on board the yacht."

It was my turn now to start. Of what was this young woman talking? "Amyl pearls!" Was I mad, or was she?

She saw my perplexity, and hastened to enlighten me.

"Oh, dear, Philip!" she exclaimed. "I forgot again. There is so much to tell you. Really, I hardly know where to begin. Miss Clement has been of such aid to us! She is what they call an 'independent missionary.' That is, she has no affiliation with any of the church societies or reform associations. For fifteen years she has been working in Chinatown among the white women, and she knows the place and the people as if she were indeed one of them. I had her out at Cragholt for a day and I've seen her four or five times here in town, and I have told her everything, and she has explained, or at least given quite reasonable surmises, concerning many of the incidents that seemed to us inexplicable. Did you ever hear of amyl pearls?"

Of course I had heard something of amyl pearls, and I said so.

"They are glass capsules," I added, "and contain a liquid which smells like bananas. They use them, I believe, in heart attacks, by crushing them in a handkerchief and inhaling the drug."

But it was not the same drug, Evelyn explained. Miss Clement had told her all about it. She doubted that it was an amyl, at all, though it was put up in the same fashion, and released in the same way, and it was like an amyl, in that it was extremely volatile.

"Miss Clement has never seen one of them," Evelyn continued, "but some of the Chinese have told her of them, and of the wonders that they perform. She says the chemical, whatever it is, is very expensive and so they are seldom used, but that in China, especially in secret government enterprises, they are employed on occasion. The effect is seemingly to make invisible the person who uses them. Really, they don't do anything of the sort; for they are nothing more nor less than capsules, filled with a peculiarly-acting anesthetic—an anesthetic so quick and powerful in its action that the victim falls into insensibility without warning, and emerges, after an interval of ten or twelve minutes, without knowing that he lost consciousness or that more than a single second has elapsed."

"The idea seems ingenious," I returned. I was interested, surely, but very far from convinced. "But," I objected, "how is it that the anaesthetizer is not anaesthetized himself?"

"Oh, he doesn't break the pearls under his own nose," Evelyn explained. "He casts them. The slightest concussion fractures the shell, and every one within a certain radius drops instantly into a temporary trance."

"And the swine before whom the pearls are cast, do they drop to the ground to rise again when the ten or twelve minutes are concluded?" I ridiculed.

"Oh, not at all. Your muscles are not relaxed. You stand or sit as if turned suddenly to stone. If your arm is extended, for instance, it remains in that position until the effect ceases." She was very much in earnest, and tried to persuade me that, aided by these pearls, it would be a very easy matter to commit all three of the predatory acts which had so amazed and shocked us.

I am the last man to regard anything as impossible in this day of wonders, yet I was by no means willing to accept such a solution merely on the hearsay evidence of a woman who had spent a decade and a half amongst the Chinese of New York City.

"Yes, Evelyn," I said, tolerantly, "it is worth considering, and at the first opportunity I shall look into it. But just now there must be more important matters for you and me to discuss. Did Miss Clement, by any chance see Yup Sing?"

At the question the girl's pale cheeks flushed to her temples and her violet eyes blazed.

"I asked her to see him, and she did," was her answer. "I thought she might learn from him when and where you parted, and what led up to the plight in which you were found. But he told her that you had failed to keep an engagement with him. He insinuated that you had come to Chinatown intent upon making trouble, and ended by declaring that he had no time to devote to answering the conundrums of such a harebrained American as you had proved your-

self. Did you ever hear of such impertinence? I wanted Miss Clement to take me to him that I might tell him what I thought of his outrageous conduct, but she refused. She says he stands very high amongst his people, and that it is not well to antagonize him."

I smiled at her indignation. "After all," I said, "he isn't so much to blame. I must have done a rather undignified figure chasing Mr. Johnson through Doyers street, and then falling down cellar stairs. When I am able to get out again, I shall go to Mr. Yup and apologize."

But before I was able to get out again, I changed my mind. To be quite definite I changed it that same evening, when, in reading the reports of O'Hara, the detective who for nearly two weeks had been shadowing the red giant, Philetus Murphy, I came upon this entry:

"At 5:27 he entered the Mott street store of the Yup Sing Company, remaining until 6:42, when he came out with a tall, thin, well-dressed Chinaman, said to be Yup Sing, himself. Together they went to Ching Wung's restaurant on Doyers street. From there a Chinaman known as Muk Chuen returned with Murphy to Cos Cob."

And the date of this occurrence was the day following my Chinatown misadventure.

CHAPTER XVI.

A Slump in Crystal Consolidated.
The week of my convalescence was not eventful. Evelyn and Mrs. Lancaster called daily, and the reports from O'Hara came each morning with unvarying regularity and equally unvarying lack of import. The artist, after his visit to Yup Sing, had returned to his Cos Cob hermitage, accompanied by a successor to his former unfortunate Chinese servant, and now rarely left his own grounds. Gravid with suggestion as his appearance in Chinatown had seemed at first, I soon came to realize that it might possibly bear no more vital significance than that altogether commonplace proceeding, the quest of a cook. And in the absence of any corroboratory evidence to the contrary, and with the knowledge gleaned from Miss Clement that Yup Sing, on occasions, added to his regular business of merchandising that of an employment agent, I saw no reason to attach an undue importance to the incident. Nevertheless I relinquished none of my suspicions regarding Murphy, but continued the detective's surveillance with a fresh injunction to vigilance. And I did not apologize to Yup Sing.

Miss Clement, to whom I believe I owe my life, visited me at my request. How I welcomed her with my gratitude is no more material than how she endeavored to make light of her service to me, declaring that such offices were a part of her day's work in her chosen field, and that her day's work was her passion. And yet it was this part of our interview which gave me my strongest insight into her exceptionally worthy character. Absolutely unselfish, she joyed in a life that even a religious fanatic might well have quailed before; finding flowers in muck heaps and jewels amid tinsel.

In five minutes, too, I glimpsed her abounding magnetism, the moving agent in that rare efficiency which was part and parcel of her. Later, I learned of the weight of her influence among the dwellers in the Chinese colony; not from any direct narrative of what she had accomplished—for she was chary of speaking of herself—but by deduction, purely. Moreover, my watch, a few trinkets and a little money, taken from me that night in Doyers street, had all been returned through Miss Clement's good offices; and if, thus far, she had afforded us no real clue in our absorbing exigency, I felt that ultimately her knowledge, coupled with her resourcefulness, would prove to us of unbounded value. And, as events shaped themselves, I was not wrong.

It was now nearly four weeks since Cameron's disappearance, and a fear that he had met death in some fiendish form at the hands of his abductors had come to be with me very nearly an obsession. The care I exercised in hiding my real state of mind from Evelyn could not well be exaggerated. When I appeared to her most hopeful I was actually most despairing. With Miss Clement, however, I had no reason to dissemble. With all frankness I told her of my despair; and when, instead of trying to comfort me with empty words of encouragement she agreed with me that the chances of our ever seeing Cameron again were at a minimum, I liked her the better for being straightforward.

"I sometimes feel," I said to her, making full confession, "that we made a terrible mistake in not at once notifying the authorities. Even now I am inclined to lay the matter before them. Anything would be better than uncertainty. A few arrests and the third degree might work wonders."

"Where would you start?" she asked in a blunt, logical way that reminded me of Evelyn's faculty of going to the root of things. "You see, you know so little. The story about the portrait and the mirror, the police would regard as more amusing than convincing. And besides, you haven't any proof. Yup Sing, you tell me, has the only original letter, and by this time he may have lost it or have forgotten that he ever had it. If you had seen as much of the Chinese as I have, you would appreciate how wily they are. My belief is that the police would conclude that Mr. Cameron fell overboard from his yacht and was drowned. Indeed it would be fortunate if they did not take the view that he jumped overboard and committed suicide. Or, worse still, it would not be beyond them, Mr. Clyde, to charge that you

pushed him over. The yellow papers would almost certainly intimate such a possibility." Had some one else voiced this suggestion I should probably have resented it, but I understood Miss Clement. She was as kind as her eyes indicated; and that is speaking very strongly.

"Nevertheless," I said, with growing determination, "I shall make the case public. It is my duty, and I am willing to run all the risks you point out. I shall start by making a complaint against Peter Johnson. We'll have him arrested, get his record, and follow along that trail until we turn up the other conspirators. If poor Cameron's shares fall in the market, they'll have to fall. If the notoriety precipitates a delayed fatality of which Cameron is the victim, it cannot be helped. I simply will not longer shoulder the responsibility of silence."

The way she had of silent deliberation was almost masculine. I can see her, even now, as she sat there that afternoon, her hair the same shade of gray as her cloth gown, her fresh, clear complexion lined in thought, her kindly eyes half closed. For the better part of a minute she pondered. Then, suddenly, her face awoke, and she asked me:

"Will you wait three days longer? That is all. I have channels of information that are closed to the police, even. There are men in Chinatown, and women too, who would lay down their lives for me. I think some of them would even betray their friends, which is still a greater sacrifice. Wait three days, Mr. Clyde, and if at the end of that time I have not learned for you what you want to know, go on with your publicity idea."

It was now my turn to be thoughtful. Evelyn believed in the woman's ability to aid. She had said as much to me. And I myself possessed a certain degree of faith in feminine intuition. Aside from that, though, Miss Clement had demonstrated that she wielded a certain power in her bailiwick—was not my watch, at that moment, in my pocket?—and her whole personality proclaimed inherent capacity for accomplishment.

"Very well, Miss Clement," I agreed. "I will wait three days. It is now Saturday, November 14. If by this time Tuesday afternoon we are not, at least, on the track of something tangible, I shall be on my way to Mulberry street."

Sunday was with me a day of impatience. I fretted now at confinement, for my ankle was quite strong again, and I was perfectly well in other respects, too. But my physician had set Monday for my first day out, and he refused to concede even a twenty-four-hour change of plan. But I chafed more even at the inactivity to which I had agreed concerning Cameron than at the confinement. All at once, I had become imbued with a necessity for prompt and strenuous measures. Some awful thing, I knew not what, seemed ominously imminent, and remorse tore at me tormentingly.

Early Monday, I telephoned Miss Clement for tidings of her progress, but she could only implore me to wait. She had nothing to report, but she was encouraged. With my hands thus tied diversion was my only refuge, and an accumulation of office work into which I plunged served, in part at least, this purpose.

Evelyn and Mrs. Lancaster had come in from Greenwich and opened the Cameron town house, a great white granite Renaissance affair, on upper Fifth avenue, facing the park; and because the girl had made me promise, I lunched there; but I went with less grace than ever before, uncertain as I was of my self-control. Evelyn's faith in Miss Clement, however, was contagious. She spoke of little else, and when I came away it was with strengthened hope of speedy results.

It is my habit to glance over the earlier editions of all the evening papers before leaving my office, and later, either on the train to Greenwich or, when in town, at my club, to read more carefully the later issues of the News and Star. On this particular day, however, a succession of matters of more importance prevented my looking at so much as a headline, until, seated at dinner, in the club restaurant, I saw on a window ledge beside me one of the more sensational of the afternoon dailies, and appropriated it in lieu of better companionship.

It was one of those journals which, in catering to the tastes of the proletariat, conceive it wise to minimize their references to Wall street, save only when a marked slump or a panic points the moral of the unscrupulous capitalist and his heinous crimes. When, therefore, long, bold-face type attracted my eye with the announcement, "Fall in Crystal Consolidated," I started to read the subjoined article, confident enough that some director or directors had been spitted for barbecue. And before I had read five lines I came upon the name of Robert Cameron.

If I was to believe this introductory paragraph, my friend was to Crystal Consolidated what John D. Rockefeller was to Standard Oil, yet in the months of our intimacy he had made no reference to this connection; and, though I was thoroughly familiar with the "great glass trust," as it was called, and with the name of its multimillionaire master, strangely enough I had never connected the Cameron I knew with this Cameron, the Captain of Industry.

"I am," he had said, in all modesty, "largely interested in a certain line of industrial enterprises." That was all. I suppose I should have known; and yet, "no prophet is without honor, save in his own country."

The newspaper article I now read, however, left no room for doubt on the

subject; and, incidentally in a single sentence, revealed the secret of how Cameron had succeeded in escaping that general recognition which is usually the penalty of greatness. "He has never sat for a photograph."

But, while this part of the article interested, that which followed startled and perplexed me:

"Crystal Consolidated fell to 103 today," it went on, "because of a persistent rumor that Robert Cameron is seriously ill, in a New England sanitarium. The greatest secrecy has been maintained as to his malady and his whereabouts by those who are in a position to know. It has been ascertained, however, that after spending a quiet summer at his country place, Cragholt, on Long Island sound, near Greenwich, he started on October 21, on his fast steamer yacht Sibylla for a cruise along the New England coast. Ten days later the Sibylla returned, but Mr. Cameron was not on board."

"It is known that he has been in ill health for months; and there are those who now declare that he has sought the seclusion of an institution for the treatment of nervous diseases, near Boston, his condition being critical."

"Inquiry, today, at his Fifth avenue home in this city, and at his Connecticut country seat, was fruitless. Mr. Cameron was at neither place, and the servants expressed ignorance concerning his present address."

"At the offices of the Crystal Consolidated Manufacturing company and at those of the missing financier's brokers, Hatch & Hastings, evasion was the keynote of the answers to all questions."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

MEDAL FOR AMUNDSEN.

Geographic Society Honors South Pole Discoverer at Annual Banquet.

Washington, Jan. 11.—Capt. Roald Amundsen, the noted Norwegian explorer, was formally recognized for the first time in the United States tonight as the discoverer of the South Pole and honored for his achievement with a special gold medal by the National Geographic Society at its annual banquet, where he was guest of honor. Beside Capt. Amundsen sat Rear Admiral Robert E. Peary, U. S. N., retired to whom the society two years ago gave a similar medal, recognizing him as the discoverer of the North Pole. The Amundsen medal bears the inscription:

"This special medal awarded by the National Geographic Society to Capt. Roald Amundsen for his Antarctic achievements resulting in the attainment of the South Pole, December 14th, 1911."

On the other side is a chart of the south pole region surrounded by a wreath of laurels with the emblem of the National Geographic Society at its base.

A distinguished company attended the banquet to honor the distinguished foreigner, who a year and a month ago, lacking a few days, reached the goal which many noble explorers before him had striven for. Capt. Amundsen in replying to the speech of the presentation, modestly tried to minimize his own great accomplishment and gave strong words of praise to those who had preceded him in the Antarctic fields. When Capt. Amundsen arose to accept the medal a great salvo of applause greeted him, ambassadors, ministers, scientists, men prominent in many walks of life, who were present, joining in it.

A smile overspread the strong face of the explorer as he bowed slightly and waited for the applause to cease. Then he expressed his appreciation of the honor conferred upon him, thanking the society for its recognition.

WILL CALL REV. L. B. McCORD.

Manning Presbyterians Seek Pastor from Louisville, Ky.

Manning, Jan. 12.—At a congregational meeting of the Presbyterian Church, held this morning, for the purpose of considering the election of a pastor to succeed the Rev. A. R. Woodson, recently resigned, it was decided to extend a call to the Rev. L. B. McCord, of Louisville, Ky. The proper steps will be taken at once to prosecute the call through the regular Presbyterian channels. The Rev. Mr. McCord was in Manning a week ago, preaching Sunday morning in the Presbyterian Church, and Sunday night at a union service in the Methodist Church, making a highly favorable impression on both occasions. While he has been for some time in Louisville, Mr. McCord is a native of Hodges, S. C. He comes with the highest endorsements as to his qualifications as a minister.

The lemon crop has been greatly curtailed by the freeze which swooped down on the citrus belt of California a few days ago. Nevertheless, President Taft has a large crop which he proposes to hand out at intervals to a man who wants a third term and has ideas that endanger constitutional and representative government. — Wilmington Star.

Chamberlain's Cough Remedy.

This remedy has no superior for coughs and colds. It is pleasant to take. It contains no opium or other narcotic. It always cures. For sale by all dealers. — Advt.

THE FERTILIZER SITUATION.

Commissioner Watson Suggests That State Operate Its Own Phosphate Beds With Convict Labor and Reclaim the Soil.

After pointing out that the farmers of South Carolina expending practically \$28,000,000 a year for commercial fertilizers Commissioner Watson in his annual report to the general assembly recommends that the State work its own phosphate beds on the coast with convicts and sell the ground rock to the farmers at cost. He says the recommendation "will bring forth a strong lobby, and a vigorous fight."

The report says: "The annual enormous expenditure by the farmers of the State of practically \$28,000,000, as estimated by competent authority, for commercial fertilizers and fertilizing material is a drain upon our financial resources that portends disaster unless something be done. Soils are being treated today as if conditions of soil exist as they did when the use of commercial fertilizers was first introduced. Continual use has rendered them acid to a high degree, and conditions today are far different. Ignorance of intelligent use of fertilizing ingredients is so general that it has been the cloak behind which fancy mixtures have been put on the markets in neat packages with ready purchasers at handsome profits to the manufacturers. I believe the time has come to take some decisive action towards stopping this great expenditure and financial drain upon the farmer and inevitable ultimate exhaustion of the soil."

"What I shall say here is not intended as an attack upon the intelligent and not too general use of commercial fertilizers nor certainly not upon the tax that the State derives from the tonnage of fertilizers annually consumed. That tax should be kept on every ton of all fertilizer that goes into consumption, for inspection is vitally important in the matter of fertilizing material and can not be successfully and effectively conducted otherwise. Furthermore, the income from the tax is being applied to work of most vital concern to the producing population of the State—a work which should be increased rather than diminished, and this suggestion, carried out, would mean more revenue and less complaint about the tax, which is now paid plus unjustifiable profits to manufacturers. The inspection of fertilizers should be kept where it now is and the income applied as it now is—for the fullest benefit of those who pay the tax and of their sons."

"This suggestion, however, is directed at the great and useless waste of money by the consumer, depleting his finances for the profits of shrewd manufacturers and bringing sure deterioration of soil fertility. If the cost of fertilizers amounts to more than the harvest then farmers must emigrate. Already it amounts to almost as much as the value of the entire corn crop of the State, the crop that is second only in value to cotton. The time has come to stop the buying and feeding to the land of patent medicine-mixed fertilizers, and instead give the sick soil pure food."

"All soils in South Carolina today are extremely deficient in one of the chief elements of animal food—carbonate of lime. Until very recently the great necessity for ground limestone rock to be applied to the soils of the State to cure, the sourness and acidity had not dawned upon the people. Now the need for it is apparent to many. Circulars have been issued by those realizing the imperative need for this material in natural forms. When they tried to get it, they found it impossible to do so at any save prohibitive prices—\$3.25 per ton in carloads lots, Columbia. Excessive transportation charges prevail. Efforts to get concessions have amounted to practically nothing. This department, some time ago, took the matter up with President Finley of the Southern railway, who had issued one of the circulars urging the use of ground limestone, without making it possible for farmers to buy it. The best that could be made now is \$2.35 per ton, via Southern railway exclusively to Columbia. The nearest mines shipping the material commercially are in Tennessee and North Carolina. South Carolina has good deposits of limestone in Cherokee, Laurens and Abbeville counties. They are in private ownership, but are deposits suited for this purpose. Illinois has been reclaimed and the exhaustion of soil fertility has been stopped by lime, and ground rock phosphate, pure food and precious little expensive 'medicine' is used there now."

"The State of Virginia, at the last session of the general assembly, having awakened by a realization of present-day conditions enacted a law under which the State has taken over the limestone deposits in that State, opened the limestone mines in the Piedmont section, and another plant in the oyster shell and marl region of the coast and has undertaken to operate this mine and plant,

furnishing ground limestone to the farmers of the State at the actual cost of production. The railroads, I understand, are hauling the material, also, at cost. State convicts are used for the work, and the whole thing is operated by the department of agriculture of the State. The deposits were bought outright by the State. The companies who have been farming the farmer by selling him expensive 'medicine' for his land because he knew no better than to buy, very naturally will try to stop the cutting down of enormous profits by injunction, but no one seems to fear the result."

"This plan should and ought to be adopted by the State of South Carolina, where conditions both as to volume of present-day expenditures for mixed fertilizers and as to soil retrogression cry more loudly for such relief than Virginia has ever even approached."

"I would go further inasmuch as it is well-nigh impossible to buy ground rock phosphate, because it is quickly gobbled for treatment and mixing for higher market prices, and in view of the fact that the State owns perhaps as valuable beds as can be found, and urge that the State with her convicts operate her own phosphate beds on the coast and sell ground rock to the farmers on the same basis as the ground limestone, i. e., the cost of production. An attempt to do this, which is a crying need, I realize, will bring forth a strong lobby even from foreign countries and a vigorous fight—stronger opposition than the suggestion as to limestone, but it should be done."

"Our farmers pay daily tribute to Germany because of the realization by that nation of her potash deposits and her utilization of them."

"I have not entered into detail into the scientific facts bearing on the conditions, which have prompted me to respectfully present this matter to you, but stand ready to present the entire situation to any legislative committee and demonstrate how millions of dollars annually can be saved without decrease of revenue from tonnage."

"The idea has been generally discussed by thinking men in the State for some time, and these have come to me with the request that I officially present the matter to the general assembly. This I do with a sense of realization of its far-reaching importance."

"If action be deferred, I would respectfully suggest that during the current year the State department of agriculture, acting with a joint legislative committee be instructed to carefully look into every phase of this matter and report to the general assembly at its next session, though Virginia's experience with the plan is available now as a guide, and the need for action is great."

"How great this need is finds illustration in the following letter received by the department the day after the above was written in the regular course of office business, and it is a fair sample of many of its kind; it offers such a striking illustration of the conditions referred to that I am taking the liberty of incorporating it in its entirety:

"Andrews S. C., Jan. 11, 1913.
"Mr. E. J. Watson, Commissioner of Agriculture, Columbia, S. C.

"Dear Sir: Please give me the commercial value of nitrogen, phosphoric acid and potash. Where can they be bought? Can I buy these things and mix my own fertilizer and save the fertilizer dealers' expense of mixing and a great saving in railroad freights? I am a small farmer. When I buy my fertilizer from the local dealer he charges \$32 to \$40 per ton for C. S. meal and other fertilizers in proportion, and I can't stand it."

"Yours very truly,
"G. W. Harelson."

"Residing where this man does what he needs primarily and more than anything else is ground limestone, and that with ground rock phosphate and leguminous plants would perhaps do more for him, certainly more for his soil than all of the high-priced, large-profit mixed fertilizer that he could buy, were he able to buy it."

Chronic Constipation Cured.

"Five years ago I had the worst case of chronic constipation I ever knew of and Chamberlain's Tablets cured me," writes Mrs. Lida Dewey, Milwaukee, Wis. "I have used it for years both for my children and myself and it never fails to relieve and cure a cough or cold. No family with children should be without it as it gives almost instantaneous relief in cases of croup." Chamberlain's Cough Remedy is pleasant and safe to take, which is of great importance when a medicine must be given to young children. For sale by all dealers. — Advt.

The pores of the skin have no rules as to the sending of love by way of that medium, possibly because it is considered first class matter.

Best Cough Medicine for Children.

"I am very glad to say a few words in praise of Chamberlain's Cough Remedy," writes Mrs. Lida Dewey, Milwaukee, Wis. "I have used it for years both for my children and myself and it never fails to relieve and cure a cough or cold. No family with children should be without it as it gives almost instantaneous relief in cases of croup." Chamberlain's Cough Remedy is pleasant and safe to take, which is of great importance when a medicine must be given to young children. For sale by all dealers. — Advt.