

# THE SABLE LORCHA

By  
**HORACE HAZELTINE**

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### SYNOPSIS.

Robert Cameron, capitalist, consults Philip Clyde, newspaper publisher, regarding anonymous threatening letters he has received. The first promises a sample of the writer's power on a certain day. On that day the head is mysteriously cut from a portrait of Cameron while the latter is in the room. While visiting Cameron in his dressing room a Neil Gwynne mirror is mysteriously shattered. Cameron becomes seriously ill as a result of the shock. The third letter appears mysteriously on Cameron's sick bed. It makes direct threats against the life of Cameron. Clyde tells Cameron the envelope was empty. He tells Evelyn everything and plans to take Cameron on a yacht trip. The yacht picks up a fisherman drifting helplessly in a boat. He gives the name of Johnson. Cameron disappears from Cameron's boat. Johnson is allowed to go after being closely questioned. Evelyn takes the letters to an expert in Chinese literature, who pronounces them of Chinese origin. Clyde seeks assistance from a Chinese college student, who recommends him to Yip Sing, most prominent Chinaman in New York. Clyde goes to meet Yip Sing, sees Johnson, attempts to follow him, falls into a basement, sprains his ankle and becomes unconscious. Clyde is discovered by Miss Clement, a missionary among the Chinese. He is taken to her residence and a nurse is engaged to attend to him. Miss Clement promises to get information about Cameron. She had chosen a seat at some little distance from him, but now, at my solicitation, she accepted a more comfortable chair, which I placed in confidential juxtaposition with our own.

"It's rather a long story," she began, in her sweetly quiet voice. "And as it came to me piecemeal, I'm afraid it will be rather disconnected. You see this poor fellow suffered horribly at times and when he was not suffering he was under the influence of opiates, so ordinarily I doubt that it would be safe to accept as fact a good deal said under such circumstances. It appears to me, however, that in his case, these very conditions only strengthen the probabilities; for his mind seemed to hold only the one theme, and his statements could hardly have been either spontaneous or studied inventions. On the other hand, they were rather a sort of involuntary recital of the particulars of a subject which had engrossed him for years to the exclusion of almost everything else."

Dr. Addison nodded his head, encouragingly. "I quite understand, Miss Clement," he said. And I, too, assured her that her reasoning appeared to me logical.

"It was significant," she continued, "that so far as I could fix dates, he made no references at all to any happening prior to sixteen years ago. The tragedy of that time was the beginning of what I think I may call his mania. Everything he told me had to do with it. It came at the beginning, at the apex, and at the end of every revelation."

"The tragedy of sixteen years ago?" inquired the physician.

"The tragedy of what has been called 'The Sable Lorcha,'" I reminded him.

"Oh, yes, of course."

"You know of that, then?" asked Miss Clement. And briefly I ran over what Yip Sing had told me.

"John Soy, I understand, was the cook whom McNish imprisoned in the galley," I added.

"It seems he broke his way out just as the lorcha was sinking. McNish had waited until he had gone to his bunk for his usual nap, and had chosen the hour he was sleeping to get away and scuttle the vessel. For five days Soy floated about on a bit of wreckage without food or drink, and was finally picked up by a proa and taken back to Macao at the mouth of the Canton river, where, after weeks of delirium, he told his story of the lorcha's fate. From that day the search for McNish began. It seems that he had a partner, an Irishman, named Moran, who for a time was suspected of having been in the conspiracy; for, you must remember, it was thought that the sinking of the lorcha had been planned from the first, the idea being that it was simply a scheme to get the passage money from the poor coolies, and then drown them."

"Horrible!" ejaculated the physician.

"But the Chinese are just," the missionary continued. "They discovered that a certain United States cruiser that had been warned of the attempted smuggling, did, on that particular day, give chase to a lorcha, which eventually disappeared in the fog. So the enmity against Moran subsided, and, ultimately, this same Moran became the most openly bitter of all the avenging hordes that for over a decade and a half scourged the four corners of the globe; for it seems that McNish had not only made off with his share of the receipts of their joint enterprise, but had left him with a ruinous debt, so that to settle as well. There was something too, I believe, about a Chinese woman whose loyalty to Moran, McNish undermined, but I confess that part of the story was not very clear to me. At all events Soy, the half-breed, and Moran, the Irishman, who appears to have been a rover blade, a sort of soldier of fortune with some talent for painting, became the prime movers in this relentless quest, in which they were backed by what is known as the Six Companies. All the tongs, no matter how much at variance on other points, were a unit in this instance, and unlimited money was always available to prosecute the search."

A footnote, appearing at this juncture with the inevitable tea paraphernalia, interrupted temporarily the current of Miss Clement's narrative. But our interest was such that we limited the cessation to the briefest possible period. Dr. Addison, whose professional engagements were being politely urged her to continue, directly her cup was in her hand.

"Think, Miss Clement," he said, "with an ingratiating smile, of the rapt audience you have! I trust it is at once an inspiration and a compensation."

"It surely is," was the good lady's prompt acknowledgment. "And, by the way, I must not forget to tell you this man, McNish, actually had the temerity to return to China a few years ago. He appeared to think either that his crime had been forgotten or that knowledge of it was limited to the Southern provinces, for in the early fall of 1903, under one of his many aliases, he arrived at Peking, by way of the Trans-Siberian Railway."

The doctor and I exchanged glances. It was odd how confirmation of the error he had already avowed should thus come about from the lips of one who knew nothing of his story of a shattered friendship.

"Oddly enough, Moran happened to be in the city at the time and every arrangement was made to capture the Canton for some exquisite torture devised especially to fit his crime. In some way, however, the intended victim got wind of what was proposed, and came within an ace of escaping unscathed from under their very fingers. Indeed, he did escape in the end, but not before Moran had very nearly put a finish to him by a knife thrust in his back."

Once more I exchanged glances with the physician, for scarcely half an hour before, I had told him of the scar under McNish's left shoulder blade, received as I had been told, in Buffalo. "Moran fled from Peking after this encounter, not knowing whether his enemy were dead or alive, and for awhile, I believe, 'laid very low,' as they say. In spite of all the efforts of the combined Chinese organizations, McNish, warned now of his constant danger, eluded their search, but at length Soy himself succeeded in tracing him to Canada and thence to Buffalo. There Moran came, post-haste, and once more there was a street encounter. Moran was arrested, and McNish charged him with assault with intent to kill. The result was that Moran was convicted and sent to prison for a term of years; and once again the earth seemed to close over McNish."

The discrepancies between Miss Clement's narrative and that of Yip Sing I did not regard as sufficiently vital to raise a question over, yet I must admit that I could hardly foresee a conclusion without a much graver antagonism of facts as I knew them.

The missionary having paused to slip her tea, Dr. Addison asked permission to smoke a cigarette, which she readily granted.

"On Moran's release from prison," Miss Clement continued, "he appears for the first time to have considered the advisability of adopting some sort of an incognito. Prior to this time he had, Soy told me, been carefully clean shaven and close-cropped. Now he grew a beard and wore his hair long, and, in addition, he doctored it with henna until it became a fiery red. He also changed his name from Moran to Murphy, and instead of frequenting the busy marts of men, he retired to an isolated country place on the Cos Cob river and posed as an artist. He employed always a Chinese servant, and at least once a week, without fail, he visited Chinatown, keeping always in touch with the powers there, which were still unremitting in their efforts to trace McNish."

She came now to Murphy's so-called chance meeting with Cameron on the Fourth of July, of which Cameron himself had already told me. I would have saved her this recital, but it was new to Dr. Addison and so I allowed her to proceed.

"It was plainly evident to Moran," she pursued, "that McNish—or, at least the gentleman he supposed was McNish—did not recognize him, and his delight at this discovery was unbounded; for it gave him opportunity, quite unsuspectedly, to arrange all his plans for a most ingenious campaign of torture. What that campaign consisted of, of course, you already know, Mr. Clyde, and I presume Dr. Addison does, too."

"Yes," I replied, "I have told the doctor."

"What you don't know, though," she added, "is how it was managed."

"We have been told something about amy pearls," I suggested.

"Amy pearls?" queried Dr. Addison, curiously.

With as much clearness as possible I explained to him what I meant by using this admittedly inaccurate term.

"Incredible!" he exclaimed. "Can it be possible that there is such an aesthetic as this, and we have never heard of it before?"

"There can be no doubt about its existence," I answered. "I myself have experienced its effects, though I have never actually seen it put in operation."

But it was Miss Clement who was most convincing.

"I have never seen either it or its effects, Doctor," she said, "but I am willing to believe even more marvelous things than that where the Chinese are concerned. You must remember that as a race they are most jealous of their knowledge as well as their possessions. Just now, after all their many centuries of a civilization greater in some respects than our own, we are beginning to learn something of them and their ways, and I should not be at all surprised to discover that in chemistry, in medicine,"

even, they have forgotten more than we know. Soy assured me that not only for days, but for weeks, he himself came and went about Mr. Cameron's—or, as he called it, McNish's—country place without being either seen or heard, simply by using this ether of invisibility. It was he who delivered the three letters. It was he who cut the head from the portrait, and it was he who broke the mirror; and yet no one saw him on the grounds or in the house, and indeed there were very few who saw him in the vicinity. Again and again, he assured me, he could have taken his victim's life but that he was intent on inflicting a punishment more protractedly horrible than mere sudden death."

"Who wrote the letters?" I asked.

"Moran."

"I thought so. And Moran killed the Chinaman who worked for him."

"No; there you are wrong, Mr. Clyde."

"Then who did?"

"Soy himself. He learned of his hatred that boy, unable to control his howl of the man who had slain some one or more of his kinspeople, carried back the head that had been cut from the portrait, borrowed a rifle from Mr. Cameron's own gamekeeper, and shot the canvas full of holes. It seemed to Soy, then, that in spite of all his and Moran's careful preparation this would surely involve trouble, and that once more their quarry would slip through their fingers. And to prevent the possibility of any more unrestrained fervor on the boy's part, Soy beat him to death."

"I know Soy, or Peter Johnson as he called himself, managed the kidnapping from the yacht," I said, "but I shall never understand how it was done. Did he speak of that?"

"Over and over again. It was he who learned of the intention to take the cruise. At first they thought they would have to change their plans and carry their enemy before he had a chance to take to his yacht. But Soy maintained that that would be too crude a method; whereas to let him think that he had escaped and was safe away, and then, at the very moment of his triumph, to snatch him from seeming security, would be the very refinement of cruelty the avenger so much desired. And so the properties were secured at some fabulous figure—I forgot just what they paid for that fast power boat—the scene was set, and the great act of the drama, with Soy still the star, was carried to a successful climax."

"But," I made question, "I don't see how Soy could take such a risk. If it had been McNish instead of Cameron, he certainly would have recognized him, when he was brought aboard from the disabled dory."

"He thought of that, but you must remember that in all those sixteen years McNish had never once seen Soy. He thought he had perished with the rest when the Sable Lorcha went down. And so Soy decided that in an open boat off the New England coast, there was not one chance in ten thousand that McNish would connect him with the cook he had left for dead in the South China sea."

"But McNish did recognize him as soon as he laid eyes on him in this case. I saw that myself, you know, Miss Clement. He recognized him and was terror stricken."

Miss Clement smiled tolerantly. She was armed at all points.

"You did not know, I suppose, Mr. Clyde, that that was not their first meeting," she explained. "Soy met McNish on the night you found him. It was he who assaulted him, somewhere about Seventh avenue and Fifth street, and would have killed him

then had not the police arrived at the moment. The officers probably thought McNish was intoxicated and let him go, seeing that he could stand, and so he staggered on to Fifth avenue; and there you discovered him."

"No, I did not know that," I admitted, a little crestfallen. "What followed?"

"You remember I told you that Chinatown was in a state of frenzy, the next day? You can understand now, why Soy, of course, reported that McNish had escaped from the steamer—"

"What steamer?" I cried, suddenly realizing that the one really vital piece of information we should have obtained, had all this while been delayed. "What steamer? Did he give you the name of it?"

"In just a moment, Mr. Clyde," she said, with a smile that I confess exasperated me.

"Pardon me," I returned, insistently, "but you do not realize, I fear, what minutes even may mean in this matter."

"No," still very calm, "I really don't. The steamer has been at sea now twenty-five days. It is bound for Hong Kong. If there was a chance of overtaking it, I—"

"There's every chance of overtaking it," I interrupted once again. "Tomorrow, or next day, or even today, it may put into Rio. We must telegraph the United States Consulate at every possible port."

And then, for the first time, apparently, Miss Clement seemed to appreciate there was a real urgency.

"The steamer is the Glamorgan-shire," she said, quickly. "A freighter; a tramp; I suppose; bound for Hong Kong. She sailed on Wednesday, the twenty-eighth of last month, and Mr. Cameron was put aboard, half-dressed, as one of the crew."

### CHAPTER XXVII.

#### The Tortoise and the Hare.

Although Miss Clement's interesting chapter of disclosures was by no means ended with the name of the steamer and its date of sailing, it there came, so far as I was concerned, at least, to an abrupt intermission. For, as though the delay and inaction of the past month had served to swell the flood of my eager energy, the tide, so long checked but now set free, careering like an unleashed spring freshet, overrode all barriers. With frequent apology, I sprang to the telephone, and if Miss Clement continued her conversation with Dr. Addison, I was deaf to what she said.

What I sought, first of all, was corroboration. Did a steamship, named the Glamorgan-shire, sail for Hong Kong on October 28th? In less than five minutes, the facts were mine. Such a steamer had sailed for the east on that date. Her agents were Bartlett Brothers. Their offices were in the Produce Exchange Building.

Another minute, and Bartlett Brothers were on the wire. No, the Glamorgan-shire did not take the South American route. Her course was through the Mediterranean and the Suez Canal. She carried no passengers. She was British. She was very slow. She had called at the Azores and then at Gibraltar, where she had been delayed in coaling. Yes, she would make several Mediterranean ports. If all went well, she would reach Port Said about December 6th. Certainly not before that. Probably a day or so later.

I dare say it was exceptional that I secured all this information with so little trouble, and without giving any hint as to why I desired it, but merely on the statement that I was Mr. Clyde, of The Week.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

## Pretty Hat for Child Has Braid Brim of Sapphire Blue



For little misses from nine to fourteen years old a great number of shapes to choose from have been provided. New fabrics and new colorings furnish, too, opportunities for unusual millinery for children. It is a season of gay colors and odd fabrics.

Ratine in silk has been employed with fine results in hats for misses. Soft crowns of this material are combined with braid-covered brims. A hat of this sort looks best trimmed with ribbon.

Another sort of crown with a braid brim is shown in this picture. This is an unusually pretty hat with braid brim of sapphire blue. The crown is covered with silk over which is stretched a flowered chiffon showing the pattern of gray grounds covered with the brightest of flower forms.

Ribbon is here the most appropriate trim and is placed about the base of the crown in a plain folded band. Four loops, wired to hold them in place, protrude at the back. The frame shows a graceful irregular brim and well balanced round crown. The little hat is constructed to follow out the most up-to-date ideas as to outline, material and colors.

JULIA BOTTOMLEY.

## BEAUTIFUL EVENING GOWN ADORNING THE GUEST ROOM



Particularly Effective Touches May Be Given to Draperies, Especially if They Are of Cretonne.

If you have cretonne draperies in your guest room there are many attractive articles you can make to add comfort and beauty to the room. Purchase cretonne to match, or, if this is impossible, a design showing the same coloring.

Lovely bureau scarfs are fashioned by cutting the cretonne the exact dimensions of the bureau top. Cover this with white marquisette and between the top and the china silk lining place one thickness of cotton wadding. Whipstitch the edges together and finish them with a narrow edging of gold lace.

The marquisette softens the colors of the cretonne, producing a pastel effect.

A rectangular sofa cushion can be made of the same materials, and is particularly beautiful when ornamented with a large flat bow of ribbon in one corner.

In rose designs the cretonne is extremely artistic when veiled with marquisette.

For the dressing table a long pin-cushion should be made to match. Finish either end with a rosette of satin ribbon.

Frames for sewing stands can be purchased to match any wood, and it would be nice to supply your guest room with one with a cretonne top to match the draperies.

Cover the cretonne with the marquisette and line it with china silk. Gather this with a heading to the frame and finish each corner with a bow of ribbon. The top hangs pocket-like from the frame and holds all the articles necessary for mending. This is a very useful article, and the well-appointed guest room should be supplied with sewing stand.

Fashionable Colors.

This is the time of year when colors change, just as do hats and gowns. Court blue is one of the latest. It is a cross between electric and gendarme.

Taupe has shed its brown tinge and has acquired the tint like elephant gray.

One of the prettiest blues is blue vigo, a deep and yet bright shade. Shrimp is the favored pink.

A glorious red which looks extremely well with white is called rose Venetian.

Chalk white is en vogue. Amaranth is a claret shade. Carmel is another pretty edition of brown.

Verdeggris is one of the smartest greens.

Mimosa is a yellow that verges on orange.

Petunia is the successor of the fuchsia medley, with the purple and red tints predominating.

Heels Very High.

In the South of France, at fashionable Monte Carlo, Cannes and Nice, one sees the most grotesque sights which are the direct result of high heels combined with tight skirts. How some of the votaries of that sad amalgamation manage to walk at all, it is difficult to say. Their best effort is only a feeble and unsafe totter, for the Louis heel, when exaggeratedly high, throws the body forward and upsets the balance of it. Yet the heel of that name is becoming to the feet and is the smart woman's choice.

Protecting Jewelry.

It is well to cover jewelry with a thin coat of collodion when storing, it in the safety deposit vault. The collodion can be dissolved with alcohol or ether when the jewelry is brought forth again. Jewelry of almost every description can be thoroughly cleaned with soap and water. It should then be packed in boxwood sawdust for several hours until it is dry in every crevice.

## Race Not Going Backward

Proo: That the Men of Today Are at Least Taller in Stature Than Their Ancestors.

Some time ago when it was wished to use some ancient suits of English armor for a pageant it was found that they were all too small for the use of the average man. Now comes a similar story from Germany. The custodian of a castle near Innsbruck, a man slightly under the average height, says that he has tried on every suit of armor in the castle and that they are all too small for him. The custodian of the castle of Voduz, who is of still lesser stature, says the same thing of the armor under his care, and we are reminded of the low doors and short beds that are so distinguishing a feature of old Gothic houses.

It is possible that the human race is increasing in stature? It would seem so. We can hardly account for

Turn About Is Fair Play.

Farmer Beetroot (back from the metropolis)—I had a bully time, I tell you.

Si Perkins—Didn't the waiters' strike make trouble at meal times?

Farmer Beetroot—Not for me; I put up with one o' my summer boarders.—Judge.

## No Satisfying Pass Fiend

Comedian Relates Story That Would Seem to Be Almost the Limit Even in That Line.

Raymond Hitchcock is to be credited with this story, says the New York correspondent of the Cincinnati Times Star. He deserves it, for of late he has milked cows from the wrong side, fussed with his wife on the deck of an ocean liner and been kicked into the water by a motor boat in his hunt for first page position and something better than a No. 4 headline. "An old friend of mine came to me last winter," said Hitchcock, "and asked me to get him tickets to the show in which I was then appearing. 'I would if I could, old chap,' I said, 'but honestly, I can't get 'em for you. I have no account at the box office. The only way in which I can get you tickets would be to pay for them out of my own pocket.'"

"Aw," said he, "any old place will do. I don't care where I sit. See if they won't let you have a pair for me. Explain to 'em that I'm an old friend."

Mr. Hitchcock admittedly lost his temper. He pulled a five-dollar bill out of his pocket and walked toward the box office window. They had

## Trimmings From Chinese Skirts.

Chinese skirts in the original certainly possess as many varied uses as the famous porker, whose only loss is its squeal. The front and back panels, with their rich embroideries in Peking stitch, make exquisite long sailor collars which will miraculously turn your most commonplace frock into a veritable creation. The yards on yards of two-toned Chinese blue embroidery bandings make trimming galore for a stunning gown and hat. A striking parasol in these days of unique ones, is made from the skirt's pleated and embroidered sides, and an equally effective piano lamp shade can be evolved from the same, with the addition of the panels.

Influence of East on New Clothes.

The Chinese coat, a short, straight cut garment, with loose body and sleeves, is another example of the influence of the east on present-day fashions. Boleros are talked of for three-piece garments, but somehow with the draped effects the bolero does not seem in keeping. However, as change is what is aimed at, we shall see these introduced again, more in the Spanish style and trimmed with a treader. As a natural sequence to this mode the matador hat will again be seen.

Irish Crochet in Colors.

The new Irish crochet, printed in colors, strongly resembles the Bulgarian designs. Bands of this trimming are used as a bordering on thin crepons and voiles. Colored voiles, such as champagne, pale gray, rose pink, etc., are trimmed with bands of all-white Irish crochet, while all-white voiles and crepons are trimmed with the Irish crochet in color.