

# The SABLE ORCHID

By HORACE HAZELTINE

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### SYNOPSIS.

**CHAPTER I.**—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.

**CHAPTER II.**—Clyde has a theory that the portrait was mutilated while the room was unoccupied and the head later removed by means of a string, unnoticed by Cameron.

**CHAPTER III.**—Evelyn Grayson, Cameron's niece, with whom Clyde is in love, finds the head of Cameron's portrait nailed to a tree where "she" has been used as a target. Clyde pledges Evelyn to secrecy.

**CHAPTER IV.**—Clyde learns that the portrait was employed by Philip Murphy, an artist living in Peoria, and borrows a rifle from Cameron's lodgekeeper.

**CHAPTER V.**—Clyde makes an excuse to call on Murphy and is appalled. He pretends to be investigating alleged infractions of the game laws and speaks of finding the bowl of an opium pipe under the tree where Cameron's portrait was found. The Chinese boy is found dead next morning.

### CHAPTER VI.

#### Nell Gwynne's Mirror.

With the approach of the twenty-first of the month, which is to say the seventh day following Cameron's receipt of the second letter, I observed in him a growing nervous restlessness, which with praiseworthy effort he was evidently striving to overcome. Of my visit to the red giant and the tragedy which followed it, he was, of course, informed; as he had been of the incident in the wood, including the finding of the bullet-pierced piece of canvas. Everything, save only that Evelyn was the discoverer of the portrait remnant—which I thought best under the circumstances to keep secret—was told to him in detail, and with all the circumstantiality necessary to an intelligent discussion of even the minutest point.

My description of Murphy elicited from him a recollection. He remembered having seen the man once. It was on the Fourth of July, Evelyn and Mrs. Lancaster, Cameron's housekeeper, had accompanied Cameron to what is called "The Port of Missing Men," a resort for motorists, on the summit of Titicus mountain. They had lunched there and were returning by a route which took them over a succession of execrable roads, but through some of the most glorious scenery in the whole state of Connecticut. For a while they had been following a stream, willow-grit that went babbling down over a rocky bed which at intervals broke the waters into a series of falls and cascades. At the foot of one of these they had stopped the car and alighted for a better view, and so had come upon the unexpected.

Seated upon a great boulder, his easel planted between the stones of the stream's shallows, was a red-headed, red-bearded Colonus, in a soiled suit of khaki and a monstrous straw hat such as is worn by harvesting farmers. Cameron told me that all three of them made bold to peep over the painter's shoulder at his work, and then, though it was of the most mediocre quality, to shower him with laudatory and congratulatory phrases.

"I can fancy how he thanked you," I broke in, smiling. "I suppose he said something very rude."

"He said nothing at all. He simply stopped painting, and turning, fixed his eyes upon me. It was as if he saw no other one of us. He seemed to be making a careful appraisal of my every feature. After a moment it grew embarrassing, and though I did not resent it—feeling rather that we, ourselves, had been in the wrong—I very speedily withdrew. To my surprise he rose from his stone seat; and, palette and brush in hand, followed us up the little activity to the road, watching in silence, until we got back into our car, and wheeled away."

"Did you gather from his inspection that he recognized you, or thought he recognized you?" I asked.

"I gathered only that he meant to be insufferably rude," was Cameron's answer.

"And you have never seen him since?"

"Never."

"He has evidently seen you. He spoke of the Russian wolf-hounds that go about with you."

Cameron made no response.

"Well," I added, in a tone meant to be reassuring, "I think we need have little fear of a continuance of this singular method of annoyance."

### IMPORTANT TO MOTHERS

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## SAVED FROM AN OPERATION

### How Mrs. Reed of Peoria, Ill., Escaped The Surgeon's Knife.

Peoria, Ill.—"I wish to let every one know what Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound has done for me. Fortwo years I suffered. The doctor said I had a tumor and the only remedy was the surgeon's knife. My mother bought me Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, and today I am a well and healthy woman. For months I suffered from inflammation, and your Sanative Wash relieved me. I am glad to tell anyone what your medicines have done for me. You can use my testimonial in any way you wish, and I will be glad to answer letters."—MRS. CHRISTINA REED, 105 Mound St., Peoria, Ill.



Mrs. Lynch Also Avoided Operation.

Jensup, Pa.—"After the birth of my fourth child, I had severe organic inflammation. I would have such terrible pains that it did not seem as though I could stand it. This kept up for three long months, until two doctors decided that an operation was needed. "Then one of my friends recommended Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and after taking it for two months I was a well woman."—MRS. JOSEPH A. LYNCH, Jessup, Pa.

Women who suffer from female ills should try Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, one of the most successful remedies the world has ever known, before submitting to a surgical operation.

On the left, the third door connected with Cameron's bedroom. On the right were two windows, giving upon an outside balcony. Between them was a fire-place.

To the left of the bath room door was the entrance to a huge closet, guarded by a heavy curtain of old rose velvet. To the right, was a stationary wash-stand, and above it a rectangular mirror, probably ten inches wide and a foot long, and very curiously framed. Across from this, against the wall which divided the room from the passage, was an enormous chiffonier, or chest of drawers. In the room's center was a round table, on which rested a reading lamp. Between the table and the fire-place was a reclining chair. Other chairs, three or four, were variously placed.

I have given these facts because they are necessary to an intelligent understanding of what I am about to relate. That in furnishing and adorning the room was plainly utilitarian is not so material. But there is one exception to this general declaration which demands to be specified. The mirror above the wash-stand possessed a distinction quite aside from its practical utility. This was by no means the first time I had seen it. Cameron had showed it to me, with a degree of pride, early in our acquaintance, explaining that it was at once a relic and an heirloom. Originally the property of Nell Gwynne, it had descended to him through three or four generations of maternal ancestors.

The glass was framed in colored beadwork, to which were attached wax figures in high relief; at the top, a miniature portrait of Charles II. in his state robes; at the bottom, one of Nell herself, in court dress. The king appeared also on the right, in hunting costume, and on the left was another figure of his favorite in less ornamental garb. According to the legend which accompanied this interesting antique, it was Nell Gwynne's own handiwork.

It possessed for me a certain fascination due more to its history than its beauty, for it was not the most artistic of creations, and as Cameron poked about for his Baudelaire, I stood gazing at the glass and thinking of all I had ever read of the flatterer, but fancy, sprightly actress whose sole claim to fame hung on her winning the favor of that easy-going, royal hypocrite, Charles II.

"Here's the binding!" I heard Cameron say, and turned from the mirror to the table, where he had found his sought-for treasure beneath a pile of heavier, grosser works.

"You know something of book-binding," he went on, with enthusiasm. "Now examine that carefully, and tell me if you ever saw anything more exquisite. I had it done in London, last year. It's a copy of one of Le Gascon's."

At first sight it seemed all glittering gold; but on closer inspection I found that the groundwork was bright red morocco, inlaid with buff, olive, and marble leather, the spaces closely filled with very delicate and beautiful gold-tooled traceries. It was a veritable gem in its way, and I could not blame Cameron for his raptures.

When I had applauded and congratulated to his content, he took the little volume from my hand and opened it, with a sort of slow reverence, observed with something like patronism:

"I'm afraid you don't quite understand Baudelaire."

"Does anybody?" I bung back.

"He is not so obscure as his critics would have us believe," Cameron asserted. "All down in that lounching chair a moment, and I'll read you something." And as I obeyed, he drew up a chair for himself, opening all the while in explanation of the title and the influence of his criticism.

One point which Cameron had said while I had been listening. To my mind he read some well thought-out

paused often in mid-verse to explain what he thought I might regard as an affectation or, as Tolstoy has put it, "an intentional obscurity."

There was one verse which impressed me particularly as he read it, and remained with me for a long while afterward, for, in view of everything, it seemed to have a special appropriateness. The lines to which I refer have been translated in this way:

From Heaven's high balconies  
Soot in their threadbare robes the dead  
years cast their eyes,  
And from the depths below regret's wan  
smile appears.

Cameron sat with his back to the door leading to the passage, and, facing, diagonally, across the table, the Nell Gwynne mirror. My own gaze was on him as he read.

As he finished the verse, a portion of which I have quoted, he lifted his eyes, I thought to meet mine, but his look rose over my head, and clung, while his lids widened, and into every line of his face there came a rigid, startled expression, half amazement, half horror. And in that instant of tense silence the "Fleurs du Mal" slipped from his nerveless fingers, struck the table edge, and dropped with unseemly echo to the floor.

In a breath I was on my feet and starting where his vision had focused, I hardly knew what I expected to see. I am sure nothing would have surprised me. And yet I was scarcely prepared for the inexplicable ruin which my sight encountered. The glass of the Nell Gwynne mirror was in atoms.

Cameron rose, a little unsteadily I thought, and coming around the table, joined me in closer inspection of his wrecked heirloom. I can find no word adequate to the description of what we experienced. Amazement and all its synonyms are far too feeble for the task. We were certainly more than appalled. What we saw suggested to me spontaneous disintegration. If such a thing were possible, which I believe it is not, it might have explained the condition of the mirror. No other ascription seemed admissible; for, though the glass remained in its frame not so much as a splinter having been dropped, it was fractured into a thousand tiny pieces, resembling a crystal mosaic, incapable of any but the most minute reflections. And the change to this condition from a fair, unmarred panel had been wrought without sound and seemingly without human agency.

For just a moment Cameron stared in dumb awe. When he turned to me he appeared suddenly to have aged. His eyes were listless, and his cheeks wore a gray pallor.

"My God!" he murmured in a kind of breathless whisper.

I would have given a great deal to have been able to allay that terror of the impalpable which was gripping him. But I was helpless. Shocked and astounded, myself, solace was not at my command. More to escape the piteous appeal of his silent gaze than in hope of making discovery, I turned in haste to one of the long windows which opened on the outer balcony. Drawing back the shades and flinging them wide, I stepped outside and, listening, over the railing.

But the night was strangely still. There was no sound, even, of stirring leaves. A brooding hush seemed spread over all the outdoor world—that ominous silence which often precedes the breaking of a storm. I looked up to find the heavens wrapped in a pall of inky cloud. And then, with a feeling of having fled from a lesser to a greater evil, I returned to the lighted room, and closed the window to shut out the horror of the night.

Cameron was standing where I had left him. He looked woefully tired and haggard.

"Explain it!" he cried, hoarsely. "My God, Clyde, explain it!"

"I would to Heaven I could," was my forlorn reply.

### CHAPTER VII.

"From Sight of Men Into Torment." Seldom have I passed a more miserable hour than that which followed upon the seeming phenomenon I have described. Cameron was nervously in tatters and my own poise was something more than threatened. The sight of a usually brave, strong, self-contained person of stolidly phlegmatic temperament transformed into a relaxed, nervous, apprehensive creature is enough of itself to try one's fortitude, even with the most favorable collateral conditions. And the collateral conditions here were quite the reverse. That which had affected Cameron had exerted an influence upon me as well, knowing, as I did, all the circumstances and being interested, as I was, in my friend's problem. And so while his plight tore at my heartstrings, my own inability to grapple with the mystery contributed an added mental distress.

To my dismay I found Cameron quite incapable of anything approaching a calm, common-sense discussion of the matter, and realized to the full the mischief which this last performance, coming as it did upon a week of more or less disquietude, had effected.

He sat most of the time with head bent forward and knees doubled, his toes touching the floor but his heels raised and in constant vibrating movement as though stricken with palsy. The fingers of one hand toyed incessantly, too, with the fingers of the other, in a variety of twisting, snakelike involutions. In vain I endeavored to attract him; to stir in him a spirit of resignation. Some one was paying tricks upon him, and that some one must be discovered and

brought to justice. Common sense told us that, however mysterious these happenings appeared, they could not have occurred without human agency. It was our task to discover the agent and punish him. This was my line of argument; but through it all, Cameron sat unmoved and unresponsive.

And then there came to me again, that unwelcome suspicion that all along he had been hiding something from me; that he divined the cause and the source of the persecution, but for some reason of his own would not divulge them.

I rang for one of the footmen and had some brandy brought, and forced Cameron to swallow a stiff drink of it, in which I joined him. But even this stimulant had small effect upon him. And when, finally, I reluctantly bade him good-night, I was overwhelmed by the pathos of his condition. So wrought and tortured, indeed, was I, by the sad picture of de-throned courage which followed me home, that sleep fled me and left me wide-eyed until the dawn.

The tidings which came to me with my coffee that morning were more than half expected. Cameron was ill, and his physician had been summoned from New York.

When I reached Cragholt the doctor had come and gone, and a trained nurse was in attendance. Evelyn, meeting me in the hall, conveyed this intelligence in a breath, and then, laying hold upon me, a slender hand upon each coat sleeve, her big eyes pleading and anxious, she ran on:

"It is shock, Dr. Massey says. Deffered shock, he called it. He says Uncle Robert has suffered from some sudden grief, fright, or other dreadful mental impression. His temperature is way below normal and his pulse is a sort of rapid feeble flutter. Oh, do tell me what you know about it. What shock has he had? You were with him last evening. He was gay enough when you and he went from the music room. What happened afterward?"

Carelessly I rested my palms upon her shoulders.

"My dear little girl," I said, soothingly. "I am sorry I can't satisfy your very natural curiosity."

"But it isn't curiosity," she corrected, promptly. "It's interest."

"Well, interest then. My sorry, I say. Something did happen; but to tell you just what it was, and why it was a shock to him, I am not able. Not now, at least. Maybe, some day, you'll know all about it."

There never was a more reasonable young person than Evelyn Grayson. Most girls, I fancy, would have teased and grown peevish at being denied. But she seemed to understand.

"Do you want to see uncle?" she asked me.

"I don't believe it would be wise," I answered. "Probably I, being a reminder, might do him harm. Tell me how he seems? He isn't unconscious?"

"No. He answers questions. But he never says anything for himself. And, Philip, he looks so pinched and old and pale! And his hands are so cold. The nurse has taken away his pillows and raised his feet, and—it's gruesome, that's the only word that describes it."

"But he'll soon be better? The doctor said that, didn't he?"

"Yes. He said that."

But the reaction which usually follows shock was only partial in Cameron's case, and for days his life was in danger. Then followed a period of slow, general recovery.

As the month of October progressed I feared the liability to relapse. I knew, instinctively, with what dread sensations he must be awaiting the fourteenth of the month. He had been forbidden, of course, to receive any mail, just as he had been denied visitors; but I felt that in an uncertainty that must of necessity prove injurious. And so I took Dr. Massey, in a measure, into my confidence, and gained from him permission to see Cameron for a brief moment.

"He has been asking for you," the physician informed me, "but I fancied it better to make no exceptions. Now, however, I see that you may be a help instead of a hindrance."

Despite the more or less circumstantial reports as to his condition and appearance which had filtered to me from the sick room, through the medium of Evelyn, Miss Collins, the nurse, and Dr. Massey and his assistant, Dr. Thorne, I was not altogether prepared for the marked change which less than three weeks had wrought in my friend. He was peaked and bloodless and tired and old. And his voice was little more than a whisper.

He made a brave effort to smile, as I came in, but it resulted in a sad grinning failure. I lifted one of his thin, clammy hands which lay inert on the coverlid, but it gave me only the feeblest answering pressure.

"I'm so glad you're better," I told him, cheerily. "Fancy the doctor allowing me to see you! That shows what he thinks."

"Yes," he whispered, "I'm coming round, slowly. And I wanted to see you, Clyde. What day of the month is this?"

"The twelfth."

"Day after tomorrow, it will come," he said.

"Don't be too sure," I replied. "I think they've done about enough to satisfy any ordinary villain."

"But they are not ordinary villains."

(To Be Continued.)

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**STREET CAR SCHEDULE IN EFFECT JUNE 30, 1912.**

**ZILICOA AND RETURN** 6:00, 6:15, 6:30 a. m.

**RIVERSIDE PARK** 6:30 and every 15 min. until 11 p. m.

**DEPOT VIA SOUTHSIDE AVENUE** 5:45 and 6:00 a. m. and every 15 min. until 1:15 p. m.; then every 7 1/2 min. until 3:45 p. m. Then every 15 min. until 11:00.

**DEPOT VIA FRENCH BROAD AVE.** 6:00 and every 15 minutes until 11:00 p. m.

**MANOR** 6:00 a. m. and every 15 minutes till 11:00 p. m.

**CHARLOTTE STREET TERMINUS** 7:00 a. m. then every 15 minutes till 11:00 p. m.

**PATTON AVENUE** 6:00 a. m. and every 15 minutes till 11:00 p. m.

**EAST STREET** 6:00 a. m. and every 15 minutes till 11:00 p. m.

**GRACE VIA MERRIMON AVENUE** 6:00 a. m. and every 30 minutes till 8:00 a. m. Then every 15 minutes till 10:30 p. m. Then every 30 minutes till 11:00 p. m.

**BILTMORE** 6:15 a. m. and then every 15 minutes till 10:30 p. m. Then every 30 min. till 11:00, last car.

**DEPOT & W ASHEVILLE VIA SOUTHSIDE AVE.** 5:45 and 6:00 a. m. and every 30 min. till 11:00 p. m., last car.

Sunday schedule differs in the following particulars:  
Cars leave Square for Depot via Southside Ave. 6:15, 6:30, 7:00, 7:30, 8:00 and 8:30 a. m. Cars leave Square for Depot via French Broad Ave. 6:15, 6:30, 6:45, 7:15, 7:45 and 8:15.  
Car for Depot leaves Square 8:45, both Southside and French Broad. First car leaves Square for Charlotte street at 8:45.  
First car leaves Square for Riverside 8:30, next 8:45.  
First car for West Asheville, leaves Square 8:30.  
With the above exceptions, Sunday schedules commence at 9 a. m. and continue same as week days.  
On evenings when entertainments are in progress at Auditorium the last trip on all lines will be from entertainment, leaving Square at regular time and holding over at Auditorium. Car leaves Square to meet 84. night train; 30 minutes before schedule of announced arrival.

**SOUTHERN RAILWAY, Premier Carrier of the South.**  
Schedule figures published as information only and not guaranteed.  
EFFECTIVE OCT. 1, 1912.

Arrives from—	Eastern Time	Departs for—	Eastern Time
No. 5 Brevard and Lake	11:30 a. m.	No. 6 Brevard and Lake	6:30 p. m.
Toxaway	11:30 a. m.	Toxaway	6:30 p. m.
No. 7 Brevard and Lake	6:15 p. m.	No. 8 Brevard and Lake	9:05 a. m.
Toxaway	6:15 p. m.	Toxaway	9:05 a. m.
No. 9 Savannah and Jacksonville	2:10 p. m.	No. 10 Savannah, Jacksonville	4:10 p. m.
Washington	2:10 p. m.	Washington	4:10 p. m.
No. 11 New York, Norfolk and Richmond	2:45 p. m.	No. 11 Cincinnati, St. Louis, Memphis, and Louisville	5:05 p. m.
No. 12 Cincinnati and Louisville, St. Louis and Memphis	2:05 p. m.	No. 12 Washington, N. Y., Norfolk and Richmond	2:35 p. m.
No. 13 Charleston and Columbia	9:15 p. m.	No. 14 Atlanta, Charleston and N. Y., Philadelphia, Washington (d)	7:00 a. m.
No. 16 N. Y., Philadelphia, Washington (d)	10:30 a. m.	No. 17 Wayneville and d	7:00 a. m.
Washington (d)	10:30 a. m.	Murphy	8:20 a. m.
No. 19 Murphy and Wayneville	6:55 p. m.	No. 19 Wayneville and d	8:20 a. m.
No. 20 Murphy and Wayneville	1:55 p. m.	No. 21 Wayneville and d	7:55 p. m.
No. 21 Wayneville and d	1:55 p. m.	No. 22 Raleigh and Goldsboro	8:30 a. m.
No. 22 Raleigh and Goldsboro	8:30 a. m.	No. 23 Chicago and Cincinnati	8:50 p. m.
No. 23 Chicago and Cincinnati	8:50 p. m.	No. 24 Columbia, Charleston	10:25 a. m.
No. 24 Columbia, Charleston	10:25 a. m.	No. 25 Washington, N. Y., and Richmond	2:40 a. m.
No. 25 Washington, N. Y., and Richmond	2:40 a. m.	No. 26 Memphis and Chattanooga	7:10 a. m.
No. 26 Memphis and Chattanooga	7:10 a. m.	No. 27 Atlanta, Macon and New Orleans	8:25 a. m.
No. 27 Atlanta, Macon and New Orleans	8:25 a. m.	No. 28 Bristol, Knoxville and Chattanooga	7:30 a. m.
No. 28 Bristol, Knoxville and Chattanooga	7:30 a. m.		

Through sleeping cars daily to and from New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, Richmond, Norfolk, Charleston, Cincinnati, St. Louis, Jacksonville, Savannah, St. Louis, Louisville and Washington.  
Through coast cars weekdays to and from New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, Richmond, Norfolk, Charleston, Cincinnati, St. Louis, Jacksonville, Savannah, St. Louis, Louisville and Washington.  
Through coast cars weekdays to and from New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, Richmond, Norfolk, Charleston, Cincinnati, St. Louis, Jacksonville, Savannah, St. Louis, Louisville and Washington.  
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