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## Dora Lamb —BY— CY WARMAN.



IT WAS twenty years ago this Christmas. I was then confidential secretary to Colonel D. He was perhaps forty-five or fifty, cold and quiet, though always courteous and just. There was something about him I feared, pitied, dreaded, loved.

We had just left a small town in Ontario. It was storming and we were nearly an hour late. Everybody seemed a little put out. The Colonel himself was unusually anxious, as he wanted to hook our car onto the Imperial Limited at North Bay.

We were headed for Vancouver where the Colonel had a deal on that involved several millions. He always spoke to me of his business transactions, but of himself, his likes or dislikes, joys or sorrows, he never spoke, and you never knew.

We had left the Ontario town but half an hour when the brakeman passed through to hang out his tail-lights. As he went forward again he spoke to the porter, who immediately went out on the rear platform and returned in a moment with a peculiar looking parcel, which he handed to me.

"Where did you get it, George?" I asked.

"The brakeman just told me there was something out on the platform, so I brought it in." At that moment the Colonel came out of his room. I handed him the parcel, and told him what I knew of it.

"Lots, wrecks, holdups, dynamite and many other calamities ran through my mind. The Colonel, however, calmed me considerably by showing no signs of fear, or even interest. He took the parcel and deliberately untied the shoelace. As he slipped the string off we saw faint pencil marks, and in half a minute, half script, was the name, "Dora Lamb, Vancouver."

The Colonel hesitated now, though after a moment began to unwrap the parcel. I was waiting breathlessly when George, who was peeping over the Colonel's shoulder, exclaimed, "Name o' de good Lamb, Seh!" and the Colonel held up the funniest looking something in the shape of a doll, with a piece of foolscap folded many times and tied to its neck. In the same writing again was written the name of Dora Lamb. A new, strange look came into the Colonel's face, that of mingled surprise, pleasure and interest.

"This must be a Christmas gift for you, George," he said. "Shall we open it?"

"I think you had better finish the job, Seh," said George.

The Colonel took the letter from the doll's neck, opened it and handed it to me, then turned and gazed out at the storm. I saw the letter was written by a little child, and as soon as I could wade through it, I began:

"Dear Dora—I am going to send you this doll for your Christmas. Its dress is made out of Mamma's old silk shawl. I have tried two times to put the doll on the train, but the men drive me from the cars, so I thought I would write this letter and pin it to the doll and try again, and if you ever did get the doll you would know that I sent it. I am so lonesome—Edith."

I looked at the Colonel as I finished. He was still staring out of the window. George dropped his mouth together and slipped down the aisle towards the kitchen.

The Colonel turned when he was gone, took his handkerchief from his pocket, wiped two big tears from his eyes, and to my surprise made no effort to hide his feelings.

"I had not thought before, that little ones had heartaches, too," he said, reaching for the letter.

After dinner the Colonel instructed me to wire Dubbs, of the Pinkerton Detective Agency at Vancouver, to meet us Tuesday morning. I went out with the telegram, the Colonel went to his room, and I did not see him again until breakfast, as we were pulling into Winnipeg, two hours late.

CHRISTMAS NUMBER, DECEMBER, 1906.



Before the train had fairly stopped a man of unusual appearance opened the door of our car, looked about, caught sight of the Colonel, then walked straight to the table, shook hands with him and sat down.

"Your telegram," he said, "was reprinted to me at Winnipeg. You will not be able to leave here until 6.02 to-morrow morning." With this he shot a quick glance at me, and the Colonel explained that I was his secretary and knew everything. This surprised me considerably. I could not see why he should need a detective for the Vancouver business.

We were now switched off on a side track and all was quiet. Mr. Dubbs squared around to the Colonel, ran his fingers together, rested his hands on the table, smiled pleasantly, and said:

"Well, Colonel,"

"In a moment," said the Colonel, leaving the table and going to his room. I could scarcely believe my eyes when he returned with the doll and the letter. I was inclined to laugh, but recalled the little scene of the night before.

"I want," said he, handing the doll and the letter to Mr. Dubbs, "to find Dora Lamb and give her this doll and this letter."

Mr. Dubbs laughed as he looked the doll over. Then, noticing the Colonel's quiet face, he seemed puzzled.

"The letter will explain matters," said the Colonel.

Dubbs unfolded the foolscap, scanned it quickly, then read it to himself. I had thought that nothing short of a triple murder or sacking a mail-train would rouse the feelings of a cold-blooded detective.

He folded the paper, sunk his head a notch, and said in a voice full of quavers and semi-quavers, "Poor little dear! poor little dear!"

"The brakeman discovered the parcel," said the Colonel, "just as we left Q— It must have been put on there. Ten minutes before we whistled for that station I was out on the platform sizing up the blizzard. There was nothing there then."

Dubbs opened the foolscap again and mumbled half aloud: "Edith Lamb, mother dead, sister Dora in Vancouver." Then, turning to the Colonel, he said he would be back at noon. In less than an hour, however, he returned and said that a man in their service at Q— had known the family of Lamb well. From this man he learned that the mother had come from the East with a Methodist minister and his family, and from their home was married to Charles Lamb, the Express Agent at Q— There were two children, Edith, perhaps seven, and Dora, not more than four. The father got in with a bad lot, lost his position through gambling, and finally deserted his family. His wife, a refined little woman, had a private class for young children. At this she earned a comfortable living for herself and the children until she was taken sick. The minister and his family had gone East again, and there was no one to take the children when the mother died.

The operator's wife at Q— took the elder girl until a home could be found for her. The little one was sent to Vancouver to Lamb's sister.

"I will wire the operator at Q—," said Dubbs, "he may tell me something of Dora and the aunt. You do not leave till morning; by then we shall know all that is possible to find out at Q—"

Dubbs returned about three o'clock, and told the Colonel that he had wired Dora's address to the Agency at Seattle.

The rest of our trip was uneventful. When we reached Vancouver we were met by a man very unlike Dubbs in appearance, though much like him in manner. He told the Colonel that Dubbs had wired him the particulars of the case, that he had gone to the address given, and was told that the woman had been gone a year. They knew nothing of the child, but at police headquarters he found that she had been sent to the "Children's Aid," pending an investigation.

Two hours later we were at the home. The child was there, the matron said, had been very ill, was better now, though still weak, and would not talk to them. The fear of strangers and the long journey had shocked her nervous system. She had been unconscious, and had called for Mamma and Edith.

"Tell the little girl," said the Colonel, "that Edith has sent her a doll by a gentleman who will take her home again, and ask her if she would like to go with him."

In a short time the matron came back, leading a little, pale-faced girl. Her beautiful curls were tangled and matted close to her shapely head. She stopped, and for an instant looked terror-stricken, but the Colonel's soothing voice called: "Dora! Dora, dear, come; Edith has sent you this doll!"

The beautiful eyes were raised to his face, the body relaxed, the mouth closed slowly, and then the tears fell in torrents down her pale, thin cheeks. The Colonel folded her gently in his arms, and soon the little one was fast asleep.

"If she is afraid of me when she wakens what shall I do?" asked the Colonel.

"She will not be afraid," said the matron. "The fear left when the tears came. She has not cried before. When you called her 'Dora,' she felt you were her friend. The tears were those of joy, not fear. Little ones," she said, "never count you their friend if you do not know their names."

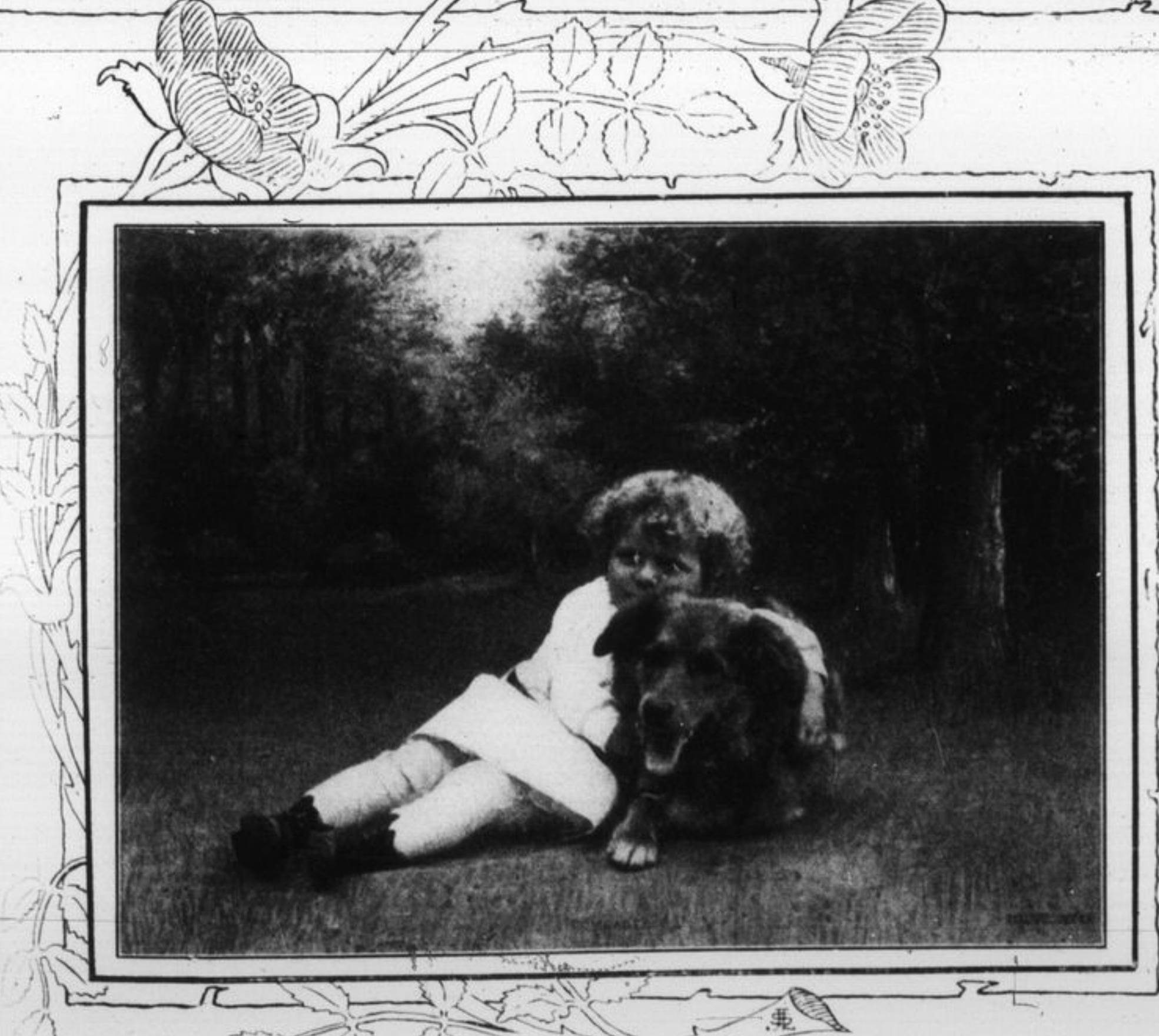
A doctor was called. He said it would be quite safe to remove the child to the hotel. Rooms were secured and a nurse sent for. For five long hours the child slept and scarcely moved. The Colonel was anxious, but the doctor said: "Let her sleep. Sleep is all the medicine she needs. If she is not afraid of you when she wakens, she will be well in two days."

When she began to rouse the doctor and I stepped into the next room. The Colonel called softly, "Dora! Dora! here is your doll that Edith sent. Bring the toys, nurse," and the nurse went to the bed with her snowy apron filled with bright toys, which, she told Dora, they were going to take to Edith.

The doctor was right. She was well in two days—almost in one, for the next day she sat up and played with her toys. She asked often for Edith, and the Colonel told her that when the train went back they would go too, and she was satisfied.



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