

The White Sepulchre

The Tale of Pelee

BY WILL LEVINGTON COMFORT

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CHAPTER II.—(Continued.)

"Of course she is quite right," Constable went on, "but that doesn't make it any easier to bear. With all the impressiveness which comes of being twenty and a girl—that was the Madame's first voyage, five years ago—she informed me that a man is a nobody, even if he has a billion, when he isn't of some use in the world. Exquisite little preacher! Such things were never thought of, nor spoken to, mortal man before! I explained my view, that having all the money needful, it was my privilege to play for culture instead of coin, to water my mental garden as a life pursuit, but she broke up all my arguments, beat down my ideals. I regarded my valueless past and yearned to become an apostle of action instantaneously."

"I see I am entertaining you, so I'll finish. I went home, buckled the Madame to Brooklyn, and disappeared—took her at her word! I shall do it again some time. For two solid months I didn't hurt anybody's feelings, and earned seventy dollars and board, stoking. Good clean stoking. Back and forth from Savannah to Boston in the bowels of an old coast liner, learning bunkers, boilers and firebeds at first hand; specializing in coals and callouses. I made a fairly decent coal passer, and met Denny Macready down there in the dark—Denny, who now passes tea. Then I scrubbed up again and steamed the Madame down to Martinique, to tell Miss Stansbury all about it, and show her my recommender from the third engineer. She was away in Europe. Her father says she will never be as beautiful as her mother. I thought perhaps we might look in on Martinique on our way around the islands. The statue of Josephine is there, you know."

"Your sentences are becoming unoccupied, Peter. You are shirring the narrative," said Breen.

"Well, I've been taking an annual course in old Pelee since then. Saint Pierre sits in the shadow of the volcano, and from a geological standpoint—"

"Exactly, but—"

"Oh, there is no joyous cracker at the finish of this story. Lady Commander—that is the creature of splendor, the mother—is still at war with me, and Miss Stansbury still cherishes the view that I am 'just sailing round.'"

Peter Constable was singular in various ways, possessing a large fortune and no fixture, save the natural bent of a student. He had specialized in geology for a dozen years. Exceedingly tall, big-boned, and angular, Constable had a plain, kindly face and large, quick hands. His nose was immense, and not to be classified. He carried his head bent slightly forward, as many tall men do; and it was a well-browed head of goodly contour. There was a puzzling solemnity in his countenance. One would not have been surprised to hear that this man was a gambler, a preacher, or a humorist; and, not knowing exactly why, one would expect it to be added that he was a good man in his class.

CHAPTER II.

Constable had an un-American capacity for waiting. He might have gone ashore in Saint Pierre that night, but instead he sat alone on deck, in the windless harbor. Quererly restless, he regarded the illumined terraces of the city. Back of all his levity and deliberation, it was not to be concealed from his own mind that before him lay the goal of the cruise. She was there, far to the right, among the lights on the mountain side—the little girl who had told him he was a nobody. Constable smiled, and grew serious from the start of an old thought. "What is the meaning of this terrific subtlety and the white scum in the gutters?" he asked suddenly.

"Why, I supposed you understood—" "Understood what, Miss Stansbury?" "Why, old Pelee has been showering us with ash from time to time during the past ten days. It is the taint of sulphur that spoils the air. The city would have been white now, except for the heavy rain that washed the ashes away just before dawn."

Constable turned apprehensively toward the volcano. He had come into an inheritance of winged thoughts in the presence of the woman, but the news of Pelee's activity disordered the very root of things. Mrs. Stansbury was standing on the porch of the great house, whose walls, verandas and porticoes were cooled and perfumed by embroidering vines. The driveway was bordered by Rose of Sharon hedges, and the gardens flamed with poinsettias and roses. There was a cool grove of mango and India trees at the end of the lawn, edged with moon-flowers and oleanders. Back of the plantation house waved the sloping sea of cane; in front, the Caribbean. On the south up-reared the peaks of Carbet; on the north, the Monster.

Constable advanced eagerly to give his hand to Mrs. Stansbury, who received his greeting with cooling repression. He would have been dismayed, had he not felt on former occasions polar draughts from this source. Still, he paid her unquestioning homage. It was enough for him that Mr. Stansbury, an admirable American gentleman, honored her with a life of one-pointed devotion; that his uncle, Joseph Wall, of sound mental balance and heart vastness, cherished her good-will. It was enough for Constable, indeed, that Mrs. Stansbury mothered a daughter. He was by no means above conceiving that another should dislike him; although Mrs. Stansbury was in other respects an Isis veiled too darkly for his perception. The years had not touched the elder woman. She had the same tendril-like delicacy of figure and refinement of face. Her eyes had often startled him with their world-weariness and world-knowledge. They were always wonderful—the eyes of a mystic and vibrant with the suggestion of undiscovered continents in their depths. The cool, graceful fingers slipped quickly from his hand.

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"You're the expert in Pelee, not I, Peter," the old planter answered. "April and May aren't our best months, but I never knew such heat between rains as we are having now."

Constable moved out into the garden to look at the sky. In no way did he underestimate the seriousness of the time. In the south, low and to the left of the Carbet peaks, the new moon arose, but without the sharpness of outline peculiar to the tropics. It was an orange hue, instead of silvery, and blurred, as if seen through a fine wire screen. A faint, low rumbling was heard from the north. It was like thunder, but the horizon above and around Pelee was unscathed by lightning. Miss Stansbury had been at the piano, but the music now ceased.

"How long is it since the mountain has had a session of grumbling, Uncle Joey?" Constable asked.

"From time to time for the past ten days. Before that, twenty years, Peter."

"This is quite a novelty—this added-egg moon," Constable added. "It's the ash-fog lying between. If there isn't a heavy rain in the night, we'll have a white world to-morrow."

Miss Stansbury appeared on the veranda, and moved out upon the lawn, where Constable was standing.

"Are you really so greatly worried, Mr. Constable?" she asked in a low tone.

"Why, the fact that Pelee is acting out of the ordinary is enough to make any one skeptical of his intentions. There are a few man-eaters among the mountains of the world—Krakatoa, Bandai-san, Cotopaxi, Vesuvius, Etna—chronic old ruffians, whom you can't tame. A thousand years is nothing to them. They wait, still as crocodiles, until cities have formed on their flanks and seers have built temples in their rifts. They have tasted blood, you see, and the madness comes back. Pelee is a suspect."

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"Hard on the Janitor.

In some of the downtown skyscrapers the elevator service is suspended on Sunday and the janitors and their families, who in many buildings are quartered on the topmost floor, have to descend and climb from 20 to 30 flights of stairs whenever they want to get in touch with the outside world, says a New York paper. In one building, which is 24 stories high, the 10-year-old daughter of the janitor makes three round trips each Sunday one when she goes to church in the morning, one when she attends Sunday school in the afternoon and another when she goes to meet her playmates after dinner. Each flight consists of 20 steps, making 960 steps to a round trip. Three trips make it 2,880 steps—a mountain climbing record.

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"They used to give such splendid entertainments, but they never seem to have anything worth going to any more."

"No. They have an established position in society now."

"I have always remembered your gracious hospitality," Constable said.

"I remember, too," Mrs. Stansbury replied, with scarcely a trace of a smile. "Who could forget the dentist—the dentist to La Montagne Pelee? Have you come again to look into the mouth of the mountain?"

CHAPTER III.

Constable had incurred the especial displeasure of the mother on a former visit, through the unabashed fashion with which he had endeavored to pry into the secrets of the volcano. Old Pelee was identified with the inner life of Martinique, like the memory and the statue of Josephine. Mrs. Stansbury felt that the mysteries of the mountain were not for the eyes of man; least of all, for the eyes of an American, in whom the spirit of veneration was not. She had a very clear picture in her mind of Constable as he peered, and possibly spat, into the appalling chasms of the summit, and pottered about in the dim gorges which seemed the Titan's flanks. The daughter had shared a title of her mother's opinion until Constable's monograph on the mountain had fallen into her hands. Then she realized that this was no parvenu who had carried on his studies in their midst.

Mr. Stansbury was away on his annual trip to the States. The mantle of host fell, accordingly, upon the ample shoulders of Uncle Joey. He arrived within an hour, and his trip out to the Madame had not been futile, since he brought Breen with him. The latter seemed to divine at once the defective current between Mrs. Stansbury and his friend, and forestalled any slight tension during dinner that evening by sprightly narratives of the voyage. He seemed to attract the attention of the elder woman, and to be stimulated by her close scrutiny of his face and personality. That evening, after dinner, the men moved out upon the veranda to smoke.

"This is second-hand air, Uncle Joey," Constable remarked. "I shut my eyes a moment ago and thought I was down among the steel mills of the lower Monongahela."

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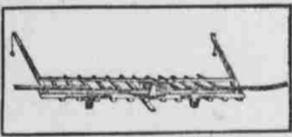
AGRICULTURAL



A Sweep Rake.

The two main pieces in the frame of the sweep are made of 2 1/2 by 4 inch pine scantling; they are 12 feet long and about 20 inches apart. The teeth are made of 2 by 4 inch scantling, and are 9 feet long; they are beveled on the lower side to slide over uneven ground. The arms for hitching the whiffle trees should project about 2 feet 6 inches over the end of the sweep; these are made of 2 by 5 inch stuff. The guide-arms should be 9 feet long by 2 1/2 by 3 inches. Each has about a foot of chain with a ring on the end to fasten to the breast strap of the harness.

The hay guard can be made of 2 by 3



THE SWEEP RAKE.

inch stuff; this is raised about a foot above the sweep, to keep the hay from sliding back too far over the sweep. It should be braced about four feet from each end.

The wheels are 18 inches in diameter; and a piece of iron gas pipe is used for an axle. It is clamped to the teeth, two pins with washers being used to keep the wheels from sliding sideways and rubbing against the teeth.

The piece projecting at the back under the sweep should extend about two feet; it is beveled like a sleigh runner; it is to keep the teeth from raising too high where riding on the empty sweep.

In hitching horses to a sweep that have never been used on one a person can get best results by tying the halter shank to the end of the guide-arms and making both lines the same length on the harness; then fasten one line to each ring of the bit. When it is desired to turn the horses to the right, simply hold the off horse back, and drive the right one ahead, and he will naturally swing around to the right.

In drawing a sweep load of hay on to the stacker draw it as far ahead as possible, then back the horses and raise ends of teeth, and drive ahead again; this will pack the hay on the stacker and less of it is apt to fall back on the ground when being raised to the stack. The most convenient size of stack to build is 16 feet wide by about 28 feet long.—Montreal Star.

Simple Egg Tester.

The average person evidently imagines that it is impossible for the dealer to distinguish between bad eggs and good eggs. This supposition is natural, inasmuch as so many eggs of questionable purity reach the dinner table. If the dealer desired he could readily discard eggs of doubtful age, as there are numerous devices for testing them. One of the most recent is shown in the accompanying illustration, patented by a Minnesota farmer.



It consists of a wooden frame or casing across the top of which is a leather support for the eggs, the latter resting in flexible apertures. In the bottom of the casing is an inclined mirror. Mounted on the upper part of the frame is a light-reflecting hood in which is placed a lamp or other suitable illuminant. In operation eggs are placed over the aperture, and the light falling on the eggs will cast a shadow upon the mirror if they are unsound. The soundness of the eggs is indicated by the clearness of the light that falls through them upon the mirror.

Learn How to Sell.

Alone the farmer has no more chance with the market combine than a rabbit has with a hungry bulldog. Collectively he may hold his own and get a fair price for his produce. Figure a bit. Five cents a bushel added to the price of wheat means a gain of \$1 to \$1.50 per acre. One-half a cent per pound means a gain of \$5 in every 1,000 pounds of beef or pork or mutton. Cooperation in selling will bring these advances and more. Twenty-five cents a bushel added to the sweet potato crop in four years has raised the growers of Tidewater County, Virginia, from poverty to respectable wealth. Southern cotton growers have made \$3,000,000 a year clear profit above the average by sticking together. Organization is the "big stick" of commerce and it is time for farmers to learn to use it.

Sulphur for Rats.

It is said that if sulphur is sprinkled on the barn door and through the corn as gathered there will not be a rat or mouse to bother. A pound of sulphur will be sufficient to preserve a large barn of corn.

Eradicating Wild Mustard.

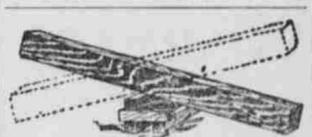
One of the most pestiferous weeds is the wild mustard, but recent experiments in Wisconsin seem to give promise that it may be quite easily and cheaply exterminated. It has been known for several years that spraying a field with blue vitriol would kill mustard without injuring the grain which is growing. But the attendant expense has been the chief objection to a wide use. The Wisconsin station has been making some tests with coppers, or iron sulphate, that indicate that it is quite as effective as the bluestone, and cheaper, as 60 cents will furnish enough to treat an acre. Similar successful experiments have been made with coppers by the Cornell station. Some three years ago the California station tried spraying with blue vitriol to hold in check mustard on its cereal plantings at Yuba City and came to the same conclusion as did the Wisconsin station. At Davis during the present season experiments in a limited way were tried with coppers, but owing to the lack of facilities for properly applying the compound results were not satisfactory. The work will be repeated another time with the most approved appliances.

Tomatoes from Italy.

Tomatoes are imported in increasing quantities each year from Italy. The quality of these tomatoes is stated to be good and the prices low. Large quantities of canned tomatoes are also shipped now each season from Italy to the eastern part of the United States, and the American shipments to Italy are much smaller than formerly. It is suggested by one of the leading importers in Liverpool that the American tomatoes are frequently packed before they are fully ripe, and that this practice renders them undesirable for use. The Italian tomatoes are carefully selected, and are only packed after they have attained a ripe and rich color.

Lifting Heavy Timbers.

When it becomes necessary for one man to handle a heavy weight, such as a log or barn timber which must be lifted, it can be done without a strain by making use of the trick shown in the sketch. Using small blocks, build a crib under the center of the log by lifting up one end, allowing the log



TRICK IN TIMBER HANDLING.

to balance near the center. When lifted as shown in dotted outline place another timber under the long end, and then repeat the operation.—Farm and Home.

Keep Digging in the Corn Field.

Some ambitious farmers are anxious to lay by the corn field very early; but it is not wise, for the grass and weeds are always more forward to grow about this season than any other, and the ground will become very foul where the corn is too early laid by and, more than this, a great proportion of the nourishment of the crop is derived from the air and dew conveyed to the roots. This can be done only when the surface is free from weeds.

Invest in a Sprayer.

No farm work pays better than spraying the trees, berry bushes and grape vines. Attention to this matter at the proper time assures immunity from insect enemies and good crops of perfect fruit are the results. Don't spray fruit trees while the bloom is on, for that kills bees and bees are valuable assistants in pollinating fruits. A spraying outfit for the farm need not be large and costly, and will have its own value the first year it is used.

Prevent Egg Eating by Hens.

In the main the egg-eating habit is caused by soft shelled eggs being laid. The hens get a taste of the egg and thus form the appetite. To prevent these bad eggs the fowls should be compelled to exercise and there should be such feed given that will supply plenty of lime, and in addition a small trough of cracked oyster shell should be constantly within reach of the fowls so they can help themselves at will.

The Garden in the Fall.

Just as soon as any crop of vegetables is finished in the garden spade the location, and if any seeds are in the soil many of them will sprout. If so, go over it again, which will save much time and labor in the spring. Late summer and fall is the proper time to clean a garden, especially if weed seeds are to be gotten rid of.

General Farm Notes.

Sour swill is not fit for hog feed. The early fruit catches the big price. It takes nerve to thin fruit, but it pays. Too much corn will produce thumps in pigs. Dry soil is one of the first requisites for sheep farming. Select the pigs for breeding from the sow with the largest litter.

THE WEEKLY HISTORIAN



- 100—William II. of England, son of "The Conqueror," died in England. Born in Normandy in 1056.
- 1496—Bartholomew Columbus, brother of Christopher Columbus, laid the foundation of San Domingo.
- 1515—Argentina discovered by the Spaniards, and settled by them in 1520.
- 1563—The plague appeared in London.
- 1690—Hudson discovered Cape Cod.
- 1633—The great Dutch Admiral Van Tromp killed in an engagement near Texel.
- 1696—Frontenac invaded the Onondaga country.
- 1701—A general treaty of peace was made with the Indians at Montreal.
- 1750—Allies defeated the French at battle of Minden. . . . Crown Point taken from the French by Gen. Amherst.
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