

The White Sepulchre

The Tale of Pelee

BY WILL LEVINGTON COMFORT

Copyright, 1936, by Will Levington Comfort
Copyright, 1937, by J. B. Lippincott Company. All rights reserved.

CHAPTER IX.—(Continued.)

"I confess I cannot understand you, dear," she said. "What consideration is due a gentleman who is rendered speechless by the accusation of a newspaper? What depth is there to his feeling for your welfare when he rushes away blindly and remains throughout the day, while you are here at the foot of a bursting volcano, as he pointed out. You will find that I am right, Lara. Mr. Constable is not even a worthy accomplice to the talented Stenbridge. He is without speech or valor. What remains when a man is neither brain nor brute?" Her voice had not been raised, and Mrs. Stansbury left the library before Lara formed an answer.

The torturing hours crawled by. The gray afternoon turned to dusk, and the dusk to night. The north was reddened by Pelee's firelit cone, which the thick vapor dimmed and blurred. The rumblings were constant. Lara was struggling to fight out her battle alone. She asked no more than this. A thousand times she paced across her room; scores of visits she made to Constable's window, straining her eyes northward, along the road through the day and darkness, to the end of all things—the mountain! Uncle Joey came to plead with her, but she begged him to go away. Her brain was a livid track of flying, futile agonies. In the evening the intermittent rumblings gave way to a growling, constant and incessant. It was as if a steady stream of heavy vehicles was pounding over a wooden bridge. There was a pang in each phase of the monster, since the man had gone up into that red roar. It was nearly midnight when the girl in the upper room heard a step upon the veranda.

"Uncle Joey," she called at the planter's door, "make haste; there is somebody below!"

The moments of waiting assailed the very roots of her reason. The voice that she heard at last was Breen's.

"I beg that you'll forgive me, Mr. Wall, for arousing you at this hour, but it is necessary for me to have a few words with Miss Stansbury."

"Sir," the planter replied, "anything which concerns yourself is of no moment to Miss Stansbury. If your message is from Mr. Constable, you may tell him to come himself or send a native."

"I dislike to appear insistent, Mr. Wall," Breen replied, without irritation, "but I cannot count my errand accomplished until I have heard from Miss Stansbury. If she should refuse to see me—"

"I am coming down, Mr. Breen," Lara called over the baluster. "Uncle Joey, show Mr. Breen to a seat. I'll be there in a moment."

She turned to re-enter her room for a garment. Her mother's figure barred the open doorway.

CHAPTER X.

Constable had been physically unharmed in his thirty years, and the exertions of the past four days had worn little more than the polish from his vitality. Instead of relaxing in the crisis of the newspaper revelation, his body righted under the whip of pride, and he strode down into the city as one who has slipped a burden. He had been beaten in a battle with a woman. Blucher had come to Mrs. Stansbury's aid at the last moment, in the shape of newspapers from the north. From Lara, however, and not the mother, had come the most crippling blow of all. It was Lara who had handed him the newspaper. She did not wait, nor ask. Around this item, Constable built a gloom-structure of baronial proportions.

His attitude toward Breen was very simple. He would not betray his guest for all the newspapers and police in Christendom. Having waived Breen's offer to detail the particulars of his past, Constable certainly could not reproach the other for misrepresenting himself.

It was ten-thirty in the morning when he sent a message out to Captain Negley, countermanding sailing orders, and enclosing a cheerful note to Crusoe, containing a draft for the stipulated amount. At the bank he also left a second sum for Father Damien, and procured considerable current paper for his own uses. His mind moved in a light, irresponsible fashion. It was as if he were obsessed at quick intervals, one after another, by mad kings who dared anything, and whom no one dared refuse. His brain kept the great sorrow in the background, and occupied itself with striking artifices. While aware that in losing Miss Stansbury and the privilege of protecting her, the meaning and direction of his life was gone, still Constable did not yet sense the fullness of the visitation. His was not a wound to heal by first intention; and in bad hurts pain assumes command leisurely and in order.

He plunged into a crowd in the market place, and began to talk to the natives whimsically, but to the purpose of starting them toward Fort de France, adding that Father Damien would care for them generously there. "I do not say that this is the last day of Saint Pierre," he exclaimed in French, "but I declare to you that if ever a planet looked as if she were about to spring a leak, Mother Earth has 'he symptoms localized in Pelee!'"

Constable's eyes had fixed upon a carriage passing along the edge of the crowd. Now he moved toward it quickly and seized the driver, he led the vehicle into the good view of all. His face was red with the heat and ashine with laughter and perspiration. Alarm and merriment mingled in the native throng. All eyes followed the towering figure of the American, now bowed before the swinging door of the carriage—and M. Mondet.

"This, dear friends," Constable resumed, as one would produce a rabbit from a silk hat—"this, you all perceive, is your little editor of Les Colonies. He is not bright and clean and pretty? He is very fond of American humor. See how the little editor laughs!"

The Frenchman was really afraid. His smile was yellowish-gray and of sickly contour. His article relative to the American appealed to him now, entirely stripped of the humor with which it was fraught yesterday, as he composed it in the inner of inner offices. This demon of crackling French and restless hands would stop at nothing. M. Mondet pictured himself being picked up for dead presently. As the blow did not fall instantaneously, he amended the picture with the sorry thought that he was to be played with before being dispatched.

"This is the little man who tells you that Saint Pierre is in no danger—who scoffs at those who have already gone," Constable informed his hearers, now holding up the Frenchman's arm, as a referee upraises the whip of a winning fighter. "He says there is no more peril from Pelee than from an old man shaking ashes out of his pipe. Yesterday I proposed to wager my ship against M. Mondet's rolled-top desk that he was wrong, but there was a difficulty in the way. Do you not see, dear friends, that if I won the wager, I should not be able to distinguish between M. Mondet's rolled-top desk and M. Mondet's cigarette case in the ruins of Saint Pierre? You would not think that such a small white person could contain so much poison?"

There had been a steady growling from the mountain.

"Ah!" Constable suddenly exclaimed, "Pelee speaks again! * * * Ugh, get in there!"

Constable's irritation against the entire tribe of editorial opinion breeders must have found an instant vent at last. M. Mondet was chucked like a large soft bundle into the seat of his carriage and the door slammed forcibly, corking the vials of his wrath. In any of the red-blooded zones, a stranger who performed such antics at the expense of a portly and respected citizen would have encountered a quietus quick and blasting, but the people of Martinique are not swift to anger nor forward at reprisals.

"Come!" Constable yelled, in a voice which jerked up his hearers. "Who has use for my offer? Who goes to Fort de France?"

A few came forward, perhaps a dozen in all, out of the fifty or sixty who had listened. Half in anger, half in admiration, which he did not seek to understand, he ran his eye a last time over the dusty, haggard, stilled crowd which he had failed to move.

From their eyes, sullen, startled and pitiful, he glanced beyond to the place where old Vulcan lay, muttering his agonies. The sight completed the circuit of rearing voltage, made him think of Lara. With furious zeal he grappled the work at hand, forced his way out of the crowd, crossed the Roxelane and hurried toward the Hotel des Palmes. His physical energy was imperious, but the numbness of his scalp was a pregnant warning against the perils of heat. The city was silent enough to act like a vast sounding board. Voices reached him from far behind, from the harbor front to the left, from shut shops and houses everywhere. At the hotel, after much difficulty, he procured guides and a small outfit for the journey to the summit of the mountain. It was after mid-day when the party rode into Morne Rouge. The ash-hung valley was behind, and Constable drank deeply of the clean east wind from the Atlantic. There was a rush of bitterness, too, because Lara was not sharing the priceless volumes of sun-lit vitality. All the impetus of his mad enterprise was needed now to turn the point of bereavement, and force it into the background again. The party pushed through Ajoupa Bouillon to the gorge of the Falaise, the northward bank of which marked the chosen trail to the summit.

And now they moved upward in the midst of the old glory of Martinique. The brisk Trades blowing evenly in the heights wiped the eastern slope of the mountain clear of stone-dust and whipped the blast of sulphur down into the valley toward the shore. Green lakes of cane filled the valleys behind, and groves of cocoa-palms, so distant and so orderly that they looked like a city garden set with hen and chickens.

Northward, through the rifts, glistened the sea, steel-blue and cool. Before them arose the huge, green-clad mass of the mountain, its corona dim with smoke and lashed by storm. Down in the southwest lay the ghastly pall, the hidden, tortured city, traced under the cobra-head of the monster and already laved in its poison. The trail became very steep at two thousand feet, and this fact, together with the back-thresh of the summit disturbance, forced Constable to abandon the animals. It transpired that four of the seven natives felt it their duty, at this point, to stay behind with the mules. A little later, when the growing from the prone upturned face of the great beast suddenly arose to a roar that twisted the flesh and outraged the senses of man, the American looked back and found that only one native was faltering behind, instead of three.

Fascination for the dying Thing took hold of him now, and drew him on. Constable was conscious of no fear for his life, but of a fixed terror lest he should prove physically unable to go on to the end. He found himself tearing up a handkerchief and stuffing the shreds in his ears, to deaden the horrid vibrations. With the linen remaining, he filled his mouth, shutting his jaws together upon it, as the wheels of a wagon are blocked on an incline.

The titanic disorder plucked his own. He revealed in it, unconscious of passing time. He did not realize that he was alone, but knew well from the contour of the slope, learned intimately in past visits, that he was nearing the Lac des Palmistes, which marked the summit level. Yet changes, violent changes, were everywhere evidenced. The shoulder of the mountain was smeared with a crust of ash and seamed with fresh scars. The crust was made by the dry whirling winds

playing upon the paste formed of stone-dust and condensed steam. The clicking whir, like the clap of wings, heard at intervals, accounted for the scars. Bombs of rock were being hurled from the great tubes.

That he was in the range of a raking volcano fire did not impress this ant clinging to the beard of a giant. Up, knees and hands, he crawled—up over the throbbing chin, to the black pooled lip of the monster. Out of the old lake coiled the furious tower of steam and rock-dust which mushroomed in high air, like the primal nebulae from which the worlds were made. Pockets of gas exploded in the heights, rending the periphery as the veil of the temple was rent. Only this to see, but sounds not meant for the ears of man, sounds which seemed to saw his skull in twain—the thundering engines of the planet.

The rocky rim of the lake was hot to his hands and knees, but he could not go back. A thought in his brain held him there with thrilling bands—the same thought which Hayden Breen evolved as he stood at the edge of the Brooklyn pier. * * * But it was only a plaything of mind—the vagary of altitude and immensity. "Did ever a man clog a live volcano? Did ever suicidal genius conceive of corrupting such majesty of force with his pygmy purpose?" * * * The irrelevant query righted the balances.

There he lay, sprawled at the edge of the universal mystery, at the secret entrance to the chamber of earth's dynamo. The edge of the pit shook with the frightful work going on below, yet he was not slain. The torrent burst past and upward, clean as a missing bullet. The bombs of rock canted out from sheer weight and fell behind him. That which he comprehended—although his eyes saw only the gray thundering cataclysm—was never before imagined in the mind of man.

The gray blackened. The roar dwindled, and his senses reeled. With a rush of saliva the linen dropped from his open mouth. Constable was sure that there was a gaping cleft in his skull, for he could feel the air blowing in and out, cold and colder. He tried to lift his hands to cover the sensitive wound, but they groped in vain for his head. With the icy draughts of air, he seemed to hear, faintly, his name falling upon the bared ganglion.

"Peter! Peter Constable!"

He strained his face toward the sound. The lower part of his body would not move. He was unoccupied, like a beast whose spine is broken.

"Peter! Oh, Peter Constable!" he heard again.

(To be continued.)

INDIAN "WOOD FACES."

Strange Religious Rites Observed Among the Ancient Senecas.

Up in the northeast corner of Oklahoma there is a small band of Seneca Indians on a reservation of the same name, says the Kansas City Star. This is a remnant of a nation of Indians that can be traced from the original New England States, as they were forced west and south by the encroachment of the whites and the battle arm of stronger Indian bands that were constantly warring against them.

Among this little band of Indians, probably not more than 100 all told, there are some curious heathen rites that seem to be instinctive with the tribe.

Among them there is an old order known as "The Wood Face." Those who belong to the order can call in the "Wood Faces" in case of sickness, as is often done. They go through a performance that is calculated to drive out from the sick person the evil spirit that may be hovering around the bed. These faces are masks made out of wood, usually carved to represent a human form of some character, but sometimes made to represent the head of an animal.

They are painted red and black, with large silver eyes and a horse tail for hair.

Arrayed in one of these hideous masks, together with rattles made of turtle shells fastened together at the upper edges with small stones inside and tied to the legs of the "Wood Faces," as they dance, roll and kick, singing their incantations the while, the Indians present a scene calculated to drive away any evil spirit that might happen along and incidentally drive the life out of the patient. While all this is going on it is also customary to pour ashes on the head of the patient.

It appears that this organization has been in the tribe for many generations, the modes of procedure differing sometimes, but following the same general character. Its secret signs and symbols are guarded as closely as Masonry and its fraternal features are as binding. Its spiritual benefits are believed in as implicitly as does any white man believe in his religion.

No Time for Fireworks.

The mountainous waves threatened to engulf the struggling ship at any moment. The captain ordered a box of skyrocket and flares brought to the rail and with his own hands ignited them, in the hope that they would make known his distress to some passing ship.

Amid the rocket's red glare a tall, thin, austere individual made his way to the rail and reproved the captain as follows:

"Captain, I must protest against this unseemly bravado. We are now facing death. This is no time for a celebration."—Everybody's Magazine.

Lack Right Qualities.

Mrs. Hix—Mrs. June strikes me as being entirely too masculine for a woman.

Mrs. Dix—Yes, indeed. Why, every time she has an ache or pain she makes as much fuss about it as a man would.

—Smith's Weekly.

Building Note in 1923.

In order to complete the 410th story of the Skyndicate building, the contractors will have to raise the sky three feet.—Harper's Weekly.

FARM AND GARDEN

Select Brood Sows.

Many put off selecting the brood sows until late in the fall or right at breeding time. When this is done we are apt to take the best-looking individuals, losing sight of many of the essentials of a real good breeder. I believe in keeping over all the old sows which have proved good mothers and whose pigs are thrifty. Not all sows which bring big litters are desirable breeders, because some litters lack stamina and never become thrifty. Cut these sows out, no matter if they do bring ten to twelve pigs. Then cut out the cross, ill-tempered sows, and the chicken eaters. Save every old sow that is really a good mother. Many of these old sows suckle down to almost skin and bones, but in doing that they have given their litters a mighty good start, and good feed will fetch them up in condition quickly. The selection of the young sows is a much harder problem. I never pick for "butter-balls." They seldom make satisfactory breeders, and after a few months they are bound to lose in condition. Take the rather coarse, thrifty ones, coming from big litters and from mothers which you intend to keep.—L. C. B., in the Indiana Farmer.

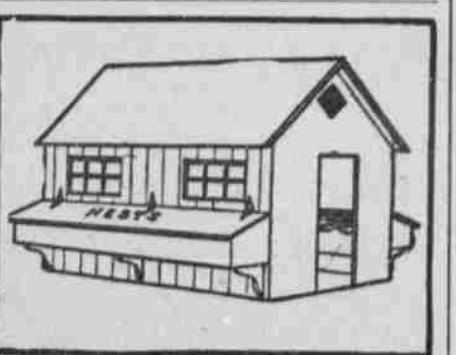
Corn and Peas for Silo.

The corn is most easily handled by cutting with a corn binder and using a silage cutter of a sufficient capacity to avoid the necessity of cutting bands. When corn is fully tasseled it contains less than one-fourth as much dry matter as when the ears are fully glazed. From this time to maturity the increase is but slight. Records of the cost of silo filling were kept by the Illinois experiment station on ten different farms and the cost was found to range from 40 to 76 cents a ton, the average being 56 cents a ton.

That silage should keep well the corn should not be cut until most of the kernels are glazed and hard. If too ripe the silage will not settle well and the air will not be sufficiently excluded to prevent spoiling. Corn seems to be the best single crop for the silo, and by combining it with cow peas or soy beans the feeding value is greater ton for ton than of corn alone. Of 373 comparisons made between silage and non-silage milk, 60 per cent were in favor of the silage milk, 29 per cent were in favor of non-silage and 11 per cent indicated no preference.

Desirable Poultry House.

One of the best arrangements for nests which can be opened without en-



HENS' NESTS ON THE OUTSIDE.

tering the remaining house is shown in the picture. The nests open directly into the laying shed and a tight lid will keep them perfectly dry in all kinds of weather.

Farm Standards Higher.

One thing that will cut considerable ice in the labor question: The man who has been studying the books and good farm papers, and kept up with the procession in new ways of doing things will find that he has a better grip on his job than the man who has not. Many a man has kept his position because he has taken an interest in his work and has learned how to farm according to modern methods when other men could have been hired in his place for one-third less wages. There is no doubt that the standard of farm labor is getting into a higher notch every year, and we have got to hustle and learn about things by reading books, good farm papers and attending the institutes. Get the hunger for reading, boys.

Cure for Sheep Killer.

An Ohio farmer, after suspecting the dogs of all his neighbors of killing his sheep, finally discovered that the murderer was his own prize collie. As the animal is very valuable the farmer did not kill him, but subjected him to punishment which he believes has thoroughly cured him of his killing propensities. Every morning the dog is placed in a tread mill which operates the farm churn, washing machine and other utilities, with a sheep pelt hung directly in front of him, and he is compelled to work all day long in this position. So keen is the dog's grief over this punishment that he howls and cries when he is placed in the treadmill, and it is necessary to confine him carefully to prevent his running away. One day he was set to work, and the sheep pelt was omitted. The dog was so overjoyed that he showed every manifestation of pleasure and worked vigorously all day, but on the next day when he went to work and found his nose rubbing the pelt his grief was uncontrollable.

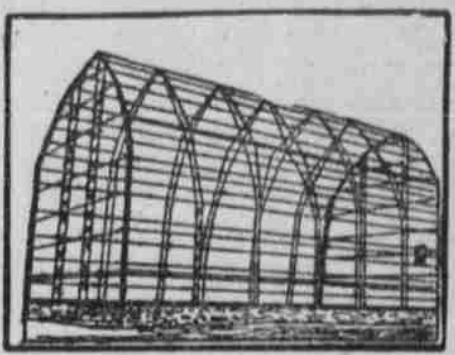
Cost of Feeding.
From experience of feeders at the experiment stations the pig increases with greatest profit until 6 or 7 months old, when it has reached the maximum. After that the gains require a larger amount of grain to produce a given amount of pork, and they should be fattened and disposed of.

One bushel of corn made thirteen and one-third pounds of pork at 6 months old, at 7 months old one bushel made 13.2 pounds, and at 8 months old one bushel made 12.8 pounds.

While there are varying conditions that have their influence upon the amount of gain made, it is a general principle that after 6 or 7 months the amount of gain from a bushel of corn is on a decreasing scale, and it has been demonstrated again and again that the first hundred pounds costs less than the second, and the third less than the fourth hundred, and that to produce the fourth hundred too often costs double as much as the second hundred.

Steel Frame for Barns.

The picture shows a new style of frame for barns. It is made entirely



BARN FRAME OF STEEL.

of steel. Heavy planks are bolted on to the frames, onto which are nailed the roof and siding as in ordinary barns.

Elements Necessary to Plant Life.
One acre of soil of medium fertility, taken to depth of 9 inches, would weigh about 3,000,000 pounds, and contain nitrogen, 200 pounds; potash, 6,000 pounds. There is enough nitrogen to provide for ten crops of corn, sixty bushels to the acre, while the phosphoric acid and potash would last much longer. There are fourteen elements necessary to plant life, and of these carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen, oxygen, phosphorus, sulphur, chlorine, silicon, calcium, iron, magnesium, potassium and sodium are derived from the soil, though several are also in part derived from the air.

To Cure Warts.

The common way of removing warts—by tying a silk thread around—too often proves disappointing in that the trouble returns in a short time, perhaps in a more malignant form. A practical horseman declares this simple remedy to be a perfect cure: Five cents' worth of bloodroot and 10 cents' worth of chlorate of zinc. Mix together in a paste and put on twice a day. After two or three applications grease with lard until the roots come out.

Tube to Supply Air to Tree Roots.

An inventor in Algeria, Africa, has devised and had patented an air tube for supplying air to tree roots. The tube is made of ceramicware, and is almost indestructible. Placed in the ground beside a tree, with the top slightly above the surface to admit the air, the young roots find their way through a number of holes. Experiments have proved, says Popular Mechanics, that the growth of vegetation has been greatly advanced by its use.

Clearing the Ground of Stumps.

There is no better way to clear land from stumps than by first loosening the soil about the roots with dynamite and then using some kind of a stump puller, of which there are many good ones in the market. It would not be safe for an amateur to use dynamite without first working for a time with some one skilled in its use.—Suburban Life.

The Best Eggs.

There is a constantly growing demand for eggs that are both uniform in size and color. Such eggs, while not demanded, are generally the first selected, and all other things being even, they will sell more readily. About the only way one can judge of eggs offhand is by their appearance, and if all are uniform in color and size they will be more likely to command a better price.

When to Plant Cherries.

About the best time to plant cherry trees is in early fall or very early in spring. It is better to plant in October, even before the leaves fall, stripping the leaves off, than it is late, just before winter sets in. In fact, many trees would do better than they do were they set early, stripping their leaves, not waiting for the leaves to fall.

Notes from the Dairy.

Bad cream will never make good butter.

Use only salt that is fine in quality and grain for butter.

Cream left on the milk too long will get bitter and rancid.

As a rule churning is put off too long in the winter time.

In the perfect creamery the animal heat and odor are got rid of as soon as possible.

The cream pot should have its contents stirred every day at least, and every time any cream is added. This insures an even ripening and better quality of butter.

THE WEEKLY HISTORIAN



1519—Cortez entered the Indian city of Tenaca.

1535—Cartier left his ship and proceeded up the St. Lawrence in boats.

1638—De Vries sailed from Holland on his third expedition to America.

1671—Mediators between the colonists and the Indians met at Plymouth.

1680—Count Frontenac arrived in Canada to resume the government of the province.

1693—The British army adopted the ring-bayonet.

1737—The Hebrews disfranchised by a vote of the New York Legislature.

1770—Congress appointed Benjamin Franklin, Silas Deane and Thomas Jefferson commissioners to the court of France. The new constitution of Pennsylvania was formally proclaimed.

1779—Paul Jones with the Bon Homme Richard captured the British frigate Serapis.

1780—Americans under Gen. Marion attacked a party of Tories at Black Mingo.

1789—Samuel Osgood of Massachusetts became Postmaster General of the United States.

1803—First Catholic church in Boston, Mass., dedicated.

1813—Americans defeated the British in battle of Lake Ontario.

1815—First daily paper printed at Albany, N. Y.

1828—A monument was unveiled in Charlestown, Mass., to the memory of John Harvard.

1830—Treaty between France and Texas signed at Paris.

1850—A Boston merchant paid \$200 for the choice of seats for the first performance of Jenny Lind in that city.

1854—A reciprocity treaty between the United States and Canada signed by the governor general. United States sloop Albany sailed from Aspinwall and was never more heard of.

1855—The corner stone of the Masonic Temple was laid in Philadelphia.

1862—Gen. Nelson shot by Gen. J. C. Davis at Louisville.

1863—Confederate troops attacked Gen. Burnside at Knoxville.

1864—Union troops victorious in a conflict with the Confederates at Athens, Ala.

1865—The Bank of Concord, Mass., robbed of \$200,000.

1868—Gov. Warrmouth's veto of the negro equity bill was sustained in the Louisiana House. Gen. McShane welcomed in New York upon his return from Europe.

1870—President Grant paid a visit to Boston.

1880—The judicial system of the United States established by act of Congress.

1896—A strike began on the Canadian Pacific railway.

1899—Naval parade in New York harbor in honor of Admiral Dewey.

1902—A \$600,000 fire in Stockton, Cal.

1904—Earl Grey was appointed governor general of Canada.

1905—Robert Bacon resigned as director of the steel trust to become first Assistant Secretary of State. The astrophysicist in the business section of Butte, Mont., Highest court of Canada denied the appeal of G. and Gaylor against extradition.

1906—Race riots continued in Atlanta, two negroes lynched. Mayor McClellan of New York, announced that he would support William R. Hearst for Governor.

1907—Cuban agitators were arrested near Havana.

FACTS FOR FARMERS.

In Norman county, Minn., wheat has been threshing out 20 bushels to the acre. Barley and flax are exceptionally good.

The State land department of South Dakota has made the first offering of State lands in the old Fort Sully military reservation, which was practically all taken by the State at the time it was thrown open to settlement.

While the South Dakota State veterinarian and the government authorities are watching the anthrax situation in the counties of the southeastern part of the State, the Governor's office is yet receiving complaints in regard to the situation, and demanding something more in the way of stamping the disease out. All such complaints are turned over to the officials who have the situation in charge for investigation. From reports in that part of the State is of a serious nature, and will require careful handling to get the disease stamped out.

The Red river valley is being invaded by representatives of seed houses in the Southwest who are after the potatoes grown in this section to use for seed potatoes through Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma and Texas.

Following out his declaration of immunity to any one defending lives or property against night riders, Gov. Benson of Kentucky granted pardons to Watson Duncanson, who was convicted of shooting and killing Newt Harlett at Jacksonville, Shelby county, in June, and Bill Harrold, who was indicted as an accessory to the murder.