

# 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."

"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 recommend 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. Queerly 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. It was not impossible for her to have met some emperor who had demanded her heart for his throne room.

The harbor was weirdly hot. The heavy, moist sweetness of a horticultural garden, to which he had likened the nights of Saint Pierre, had been supplanted by dry, dehydrated draughts of air. His throat and nostrils were irritated, and tobacco became unpalatable. There was no moon, and the stars were so faint in the north that the mass of Pelee was scarcely shaped against the sky. The higher lights of the city had a reddish, uncertain glow, as if a thin film of fog hung between them and the eye; but to the south the night grew clearer. He followed the circling shore with his eyes to the Morne d'Orange, which marked the southern boundary of the city. Beyond the morne stood the great plantation house where she lived. The night was pure purple in that direction, and the torrid stars unsoftened.

Breen essayed to read the following forenoon away, leaving Constable to make his first descent upon the city alone. The Madame had already been sighted from the plantation house, and certain members of the establishment were out to welcome the guest. Indeed, Constable had scarcely stepped ashore from his launch at the Sugar Landing when he heard his name called and saw the flutter of a handkerchief above the burdened heads of the natives in the market place. It was Miss Stansbury, in a carriage. She greeted him merrily:

"Uncle Joey went out to the ship from the lower landing. I told him I would capture you if you touched here. We are very glad you've come, Mr. Constable."

He took her hand and gained the seat beside her in the carriage. "This is great luck," he said nervously. "I feared

you might be away somewhere—in Europe or the States. Would you mind me looking at this little book in your lap?"

"It's a little volume of essays," she told him, "and I'm not sure that I greatly admire their spirit, nor the views of the writer. He makes a statement, for instance, that women are incapable of the finer senses of friendship; that women cannot adhere through severe tests."

Miss Stansbury was to encounter, a few days later, stirring cause to remember these words and Constable's reply, which is neither here nor there, ethical niceties not being his specialty.

"The man is an arrant fool, and probably couldn't get a woman to live with him," he said with finality.  
The ponies were ascending the rise in Rue Victor Hugo, at the southern end of the city. The portresses, coming down from the hill-trails, the lithest, hardest women of the occidant, bore a pitiable look of fatigue in their faces. The pressure of the heat, and the dispiriting condition of the atmosphere, were revealed in the distended eyelids and colorless, twisted lips of the burden bearers. As Miss Stansbury looked out toward the harbor for Uncle Joey's boat, Constable regarded her profile. The delicacy of color and contour brought to him an imperious realization of her fairness. It appeared that in his absence the rarest touches of perfection had been set.

"You haven't changed much," she said laughingly. "You were always willing to agree that I was right, and all men, yourself most of all, deeply in the wrong. Don't you remember how I used to preach to you about a man's need of doing something emphatic?"

"Indeed I remember. Your lessons made a deep impression."

"At least, you bore very gracefully with an oppressive companion," she declared. "Just as if you didn't know best how to dispose of your time and talents!"

"On the contrary, you were more nearly right than you knew. I was in need of just such moral stimulus. The sorry part, Miss Stansbury, is that I don't bring you admirably invested talents even now."

She glanced at him quickly. "I believe I understand better some of the difficulties you have had to contend with," she said. "We all read how you kidnaped the entire New York newsboys' association—how you fed the grimy little chaps oceans of charlotte russe and mountains of plum-duff, giving them a Sunday afternoon at sea, and presents to remember. That was fine."

"I forgot to tell Breen about that," he remarked, smiling at the recollection. "Breen is a friend of mine, who was good enough to come along. He's a rare fellow, and you'll like him."

"You make people find out by themselves so much about you," she observed. "Think how you let me believe you were absolutely without interests or ambitions—even last year, while you were making daily visits to the jaws of Pelee. It was months afterward that I learned what those journeys meant—and then through the press. We all read the paper you delivered before the geological society on Antillean formations. Think how I felt while recalling some of my lectures on your careless attitude toward life. You might have told me!"

"I failed to discover the secret, Miss Stansbury," he said quickly. "Old Pelee has a big story for the right man, but I was unable to drag it forth. I had nothing to be proud of to tell you."

The ponies had gained the eminence of the Morne d'Orange. Ahead was the broad, white plantation house, where the Stansburys and Constable's uncle lived. To the right was the dazzling, sapphire bay, where the Madame was moored among the shipping; behind and below, the red-tiled roofs of Saint Pierre, and behind the city, back of all, La Montagne Pelee, hung like an emperor of the Romans, pale in the intense light of morning, and wearing a delicate white ruching of cloud about his crown.

"It is different with most people," she replied. "They have so much to tell of little things. The silent men who are dreaming of big things all the time—think of a conversation like this when the island is glowing like a brazier!"

"What is the meaning of this terrific sultriness 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 poiseitias 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 seas 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.

"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 pattered about in the dim gorges which seamed 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."

"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 West—Kakatoa, Bandal-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."

(To be continued.)

### Just Like a Bee.

"Why doesn't that lazy Philander find something to do?"

"Find something to do? Why, he's busy as a bee."

"But he hasn't done a thing this winter but loaf."

"Well, that's what a bee does in winter, doesn't it?"

### Unnecessary Now.

"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."

## HOUSEHOLD

### How to Keep Water Cold.

"Having tried it, I recommend the following mode of keeping ice water for a long time in a common pitcher," says a writer in Women's Home Companion. "Place between two sheets of thick brown paper a layer of cotton batting about half an inch in thickness; fasten the ends of the paper and batting together, forming a circle, then sew or paste a crown over one end, making a box the shape of a stovepipe hat minus the rim. Place this over an ordinary pitcher filled with ice water, making it deep enough to rest on the table, so as to exclude the air, and you will be astonished to see the length of time that the ice will keep and the water remain cold after all the ice has melted."

### Berries Canned Without Cooking.

Have your jars perfectly clean and dry, then take equal parts of fresh berries and sugar, and mix and mash thoroughly. To accomplish this, says the Women's Home Companion, take only a small quantity in a dish at a time, that you may be sure every berry is mashed. Put into the jars, and seal immediately, inverting the jar for a short time before putting away. The work is easily and quickly done, as there is no heating. My berries canned in this way last summer kept perfectly and have preserved their delicious flavor unimpaired. Strawberry shortcake equal to that of the summer has been an enjoyment whenever we wished through the winter.

### Gooseberry Creams.

This is a delicious cold sweet, and very simple to make. Required: One quart of green gooseberries, 2 ounces or more of sugar, four yolks of eggs, a little whipped cream. Wash, stalk and stew the gooseberries until soft, in just enough water to prevent their burning. Next rub them through a hair or wire sieve. Stir into the pulp the castor sugar and beaten yolks of eggs, stir this over a slow fire for a few minutes to cook the eggs, but do not let the mixture actually boil or it will curdle. Put it on one side until it is cold. Then heap it up in custard glasses, and put a little whipped and flavored cream on each.

### Apricots Dried in Sugar.

Peel and cut in halves some ripe apricots; remove the stones and weigh the fruit. Boil fruit for a few minutes in water; remove, drain and put them in a bowl. For every pound of fruit place 1 pound of sugar in a kettle with one-half pint of water for each pound of sugar, and boil to a soft ball; add the apricots, let them boil up twice, then pour them into a bowl. Twenty-four hours later drain the apricots in a sieve and dust them with sugar; then transfer them to a dish, dust them with sugar again and place them in a cool oven; turn them, add more sugar; continue this way until they are dry.

### "Pots to Mend."

This is an excellent way to make a broken enamelware pot as good as new: Take equal parts of soft putty, finely sifted coal ashes and table salt. Mix and pack it well into the hole, or on the place where the enamel is worn or wearing. Place the pot on the stove with a little water in it, until the cement hardens. It will last a long time. And take notice that this recipe calls for nothing that cannot be easily obtained. Buy a nickel's worth of putty from any plumber.

### Southern Beaten Biscuit.

One quart sifted flour, one-half coffee cup of lard, one-half pint milk, one level teaspoonful salt. Rub flour, salt and lard together until smooth, then add milk. Beat twenty minutes, or until the dough blisters and pops when pulled apart. Roll out about a quarter of an inch thick, cut with small biscuit cutter and prick each with a fork. Bake twenty minutes in rather hot oven. This quantity makes about thirty biscuits.

### Egg and Tomato.

One pint tomato juice, two tablespoonfuls butter, two tablespoonfuls flour (creamed together), one-half teaspoonful salt, dash of pepper, five eggs. Heat the juice, then add the creamed butter and flour, salt and pepper, and cook five minutes. Butter a baking dish, put in the egg (not beaten), then cover with the cooked mixture. Put bread crumbs on top and brown twenty minutes in oven.

### Frosted Currants.

Wash and dry fine, large bunches of currants, dip them a bunch at a time into the whipped white of an egg, then roll in granulated sugar. Lay on paper until perfectly dry and serve as a dessert.

### Canned Plums.

Canned blue plums will make delicious winter pies. To 7 pounds of fruit add 3½ pounds of brown sugar, one pint of good vinegar and 1 ounce each of cinnamon, cloves and allspice. Seal the about three times and jar them.

### DRESSED DOG AS BABY.

Now a Woman Outwitted Stony-Hearted Street Car Conductors. This is a real true dog story.

He is a pug and a great pet of his mistress, who is very fond of his fine pedigree. One day she discovered that Teddy could not see as well as usual. She felt as sad as if he were a brother or sister and a famous oculist was consulted, who told her to bring her pet dog to him.

They started, but a great obstacle presented itself. Conductor after conductor insisted that the dog should not ride on his car, says the Portland Oregonian; so that it was only after getting on and off about a dozen times that the doctor's office was reached.

Teddy was as quiet as he could be while having his eyes examined, and his mistress was told she must bring him every day for a month, and all would be done for him that was possible. So Teddy's mistress went to a neighbor who had a small baby and borrowed an outfit that was not too dainty. Teddy kept very quiet while being dressed in the long white dress, then a cloak and muslin cap, and over the face a long white veil.

Thus they started. Immediately upon entering a car, if it was filled, up would jump a man to give the woman carrying a little baby a good seat. Teddy never wagged his little curled-up tail once, neither did he bark.

Each day the trip was taken with the same result—a good seat and a very quiet baby.

One day the doctor's office was filled with people waiting their turn, when a woman turned politely to Teddy's mistress and said: "My turn comes next and I will wait for you on account of your baby. It is so very tiresome to wait with a baby."

The doctor opened his door at that moment and called them both in his private office. He said, "I will show you the very best patient I have," and took Teddy carefully in his arms. He threw back the white veil and disclosed the dog's little pug nose and a pert little face looking out cutely from under the frills of the cap.

Teddy can see pretty well out of one eye now. His mistress expected a huge bill for the expert's service, but instead she received a receipted bill from the good doctor with a note saying that, as Teddy was the first patient he had ever treated of royal dog blood, he esteemed it a great honor to have been the means of helping him.

## TALKS ON ADVERTISING

Advertising, says Lily Herald Frost in the St. Louis Globe-Democrat, is the lance with which the modern crusader, known as the business agent, invades the world of commerce. And an extraordinarily effective weapon it is, as the breakfast food people and the patent medicine houses well know.

The man who doesn't advertise is soon a derelict, as idle and useless as a painted ship upon a painted ocean. When the advertiser ceases his labor it is then that the receiver gets busy. It is when advertising dominates literature that one feels like protesting. The commercial spirit rules the reading world and thrusts its volumes upon it with a wealth of encomiums and a persistency that usually win.

By such judicious exploitation books are sold by the thousands. Their names are seen everywhere, in shop windows, on billboards, placarded along with brands of cigars or some superior make of whisky. And they are accorded such high sounding phrases of merit, of cleverness, of dramatic possibilities, that, backed by the author's name and the illustrator's art, they present such visions of delight that ever curious mortals must buy them just to satisfy their curiosity.

### Not Natural.

To the studio of an artist who had just finished a portrait of a distinguished resident of a neighboring city a friend of the sitter came to look at the newly painted canvas.

The visitor was nearsighted and not particularly well acquainted with studios. He wanted to see how good a likeness had been made of his friend. He kept walking nearer and nearer to the painting and finally put out his finger as if to touch it.

The artist was getting nervous at the approach of the finger to the paint and he asked the visitor not to touch the portrait, as it was not dry. The near-sighted man put down his hand and walked to the door, turning only to say: "If it isn't dry it isn't my friend." And he walked out.

When a man moves into a western town, the thing that surprises him most is the great number of men who do nothing all day but stand on street corners and exchange fool opinions.