

The White Sepulchre

The Tale of Pelee

BY WILL LEVINGTON COMFORT

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CHAPTER XIII.—(Continued.)
"Still, I must leave nothing undone to-night. I want the years bright for you, and I must try once more. After all, the mother of my beloved can do no wrong."
"People might be safe away up there on the Morne d'Orange," she said, fearfully, "but you must pass to and fro through the city!"

Gently he turned her face from the hidden city. "Look yonder into the splendid night!" he whispered. "Feel the sting of the spray. Hear the bows sing! It's all for us, Lara, the gilded track to the moon, the loveliest of earth's distances—and the sky afterward! We can't leave this great thing undone. Listen, dearest; when the dawn comes up the Madame will be lying seven or eight miles offshore. I'll take the launch into the harbor, and climb the morne once more to the big plantation house, bringing your love and mine to the mother-bird whom I owe for all things good. If she will not come with me, I shall command Uncle Joey to take her to Fort de France. After that—"

She was clinging to him and sobbing. "After that?" she repeated.

"We steam for Fort de France then," he said, "and Father Damien must spare us an hour from his labors. After that, beloved, you and I and the honeymoon—out on the swinging seas!"

Just now Denny Macready appeared on the bridge.

"Lara, I want you to know this Denny," said Constable. "I found him in a stoke-hold, and haven't been able to get rid of him since. He's my steward at sea, my butler ashore, and 'Yours solid' anywhere. Denny, I'm going ashore at dawn—"

"This crool t' hear, sorr."

"That point is pretty well covered, Denny. I want you—that is, I'm leaving Miss Stansbury in your hands."

"Sh-sh—wait till I putt on me gloves."

"How are your charges faring, Denny?" Constable asked.

"Is ut th' little wans, you mane?"

"Yes, the natives."

"If I only had some goats, sorr!"

"Why goats?"

"Sure, I've been petherin' with lime wather an' sea wather an' wather straight an' sugar av milk—whin goats could do ut all, an' better."

Macready went below, leaving a laugh on the bridge—which was no little thing. The Madame crept in to the edge of the smoke. The gray ghost of morning was stealing into the hateful haze. The ship found anchorage. The launch was in readiness below. It was six in the morning. Pugh, the new third officer, was just leaving the bridge. Constable and Lara were standing at the door of his cabin.

"I know that you could do no greater thing than this—for me," she told him; "but when a woman comes into her own—as I have—it is terrible to be left alone so soon. There are warnings in the wind, menaces in the silence, dangers in everything. It cannot be that I have found you, my lover, only to lose you again. Oh, come back to me quickly, dear!"

"Three hours shall see us on our way to Fort de France," he answered blithely. "Trust me to hurry back to you. Pelee is still now. It may be that the pressure is eased—"

"There, kiss me, and don't wait! The very name of Pelee is horrible!" She moved with him to the ladder. "I thought I would be braver than this, Pierre Va-leur!"

He whispered a last word and descended. Ernst had been relieved, and another sailor was in the launch, one for whom preparations had been made in the dim hall. Constable was happy. He waved a kiss at the pale, mute face leaning over-side, and the fog rushed in between.

CHAPTER XIV.

The launch gained the inner harbor, and the white ships at anchor were seen vague phantoms—in the vapor—French steamers, Italian barques, and the smaller West Indian craft—all with their work to do and their way to win. Constable heard one officer shout to another, inquiring if Saint Pierre was in the usual place, or had switched-sites with Hades. The day was clearing rapidly, however, and before the launch reached shore the haze was so lifted that Pelee could be seen, floating a pennant of black out to sea. In the city a large frame warehouse was ablaze. The tinder-dry structure was being destroyed with almost explosive speed.

"Wait for me here," Constable said to the sailor, as the launch scraped the Sugar Landing.

A blistering heat rushed down from the expiring building to the edge of the land. Crowds watched the destruction. Many of the people were in holiday attire. This was the Day of Ascension, and Saint Pierre would shortly pray and praise at the cathedral. Even now the bells were calling, and there was low laughter from a group of maidens. Was it not good to live, since the sun shone again and the mountain did not answer the sainted bells? It was true that Pelee poured forth a black streamer with lightning in its folds; true that the people trod upon the hot gray dust of the volcano's waste; that the heat was such as no man had ever felt before and many sat in misery upon the ground; true, indeed that voices of hysteria came from the hovels, and the breath of uncovered death from the by-

ways—but the, ala spirit was not dead. The bells were calling; the mountain was still; bright dresses were abroad—for the torrid children of France must laugh.

Constable fell in with the procession on the way to the cathedral. Reaching there, he climbed to a huge block of stone in the square, and hurled broadcast the germ of flight. Many had seen him before, when his face was haggard. He was smiling now. There was color in his skin, fire in his eyes, a ring in his voice. Fear was not in him.

A carriage was not procurable, so he walked toward the Morne d'Orange. It was seven-thirty, and the distance was two miles to the plantation house. At eight, or soon afterward, he would be there—eight on the morning of Ascension Day; at nine, in the launch again, speeding out to the smile of the bride!

Twenty times a minute she recurred to him as he walked. There was no waning nor wearing—save a wearing brighter, perhaps—of the images she had put in his mind. The night had brought him palaces and gardens and treasure houses; everywhere he turned, new riches broke upon him. That her face had lain between his hands; that his hands had brought that face to his own; that her whispers, kisses, confidences, her prayers and passions and coming years, all found their center and origin in himself, his bright doves that had a cote within his heart—these thoughts lifted the poor man to such heights of praise and blessedness that he seemed to shatter the dome of human limitations, and emerge crown and shoulders into the illimitable ether.

The road up the morne stretched blinding white before him. Panting and spent not a little, he strode upward through the vicious pressure of heat, holding his helmet free from his head, that the air might circulate under the rim. At length, upon the crest of the morne, he perceived the gables of the plantation house, above the palms and mangoes, gold-brown in the dazzling haze.

Pelee roared. Sullen and dreadful out of the silence voiced the monster, roused to his labor afresh. The American began to run, glancing back at the darkening north. . . . The crisis was not passed in favor of peace. The holiday was darkened. The Madame would fill with refugees now, and the road to Fort de France turn black with flight. These were his thoughts as he ran.

The lights of the day burned out one by one. The crust of the air stretched to a cracking tension. The air was beetling with strange concussions. In the clutch of realization, he turned one shining look toward the sea. Detonations accumulated into the crash of a thousand navies.

On the porch of the plantation house, twenty yards away, stood the mother of Lara, her eyes fascinated, lost in the north. At the steps he fell, caught her skirt, her waist, in his hands. Across the lawn, through the roaring black, he bore her, brushing her fingers and her fallen hair from his face. He reached the curbing of the old well with his burden, crawled over, and grasped the rusty chain. Lucid tongues lapped the cistern's raised coping, and running streams of red dust filtered down.

It was eight in the morning of Ascension Day. La Montagne Pelee was giving birth to Death.

CHAPTER XV.

When the launch entered the denser cloud and faded from her sight, Miss Stansbury retired to the cabin. Over all her thoughts of the unhallowed parting from her mother the night before, and the clean, valorous act of her lover now, hung the defined terror lest Pelee should intervene. She heard Macready's step at the door; the calm voice of an officer on the bridge; the morning bells.

The pale winding sheet was unwrapped from the beauty of morning. Through a port-hole she saw the rose and gold on the far, dim hills. Her eyes smarted from weariness, but her mind, like an automatic thing, swept around the great circle—from the ship to the city, to the house beyond the morne and back again. She saw him in the launch, in the midst of native groups on the shore, in the plantation house, begging her mother to listen, importuning Uncle Joey to take her to Fort de France, returning through the streets with people following—the crowded launch, and then the joy of empty arms filled. But sometimes Pelee would burst into the deepening channel of thoughts, effacing the whole, and leaving her, a shrieking, dishevelled creature, in the midst of a chaos which would not answer. She went on deck. Laird, the first officer, invited her to ascend the bridge. He was scrutinizing through the glass a blotch of smoke on the city front. "What do you make of it, Miss Stansbury?" he asked.

The lenses brought to her a nucleus of red in the black bank. The rest of Saint Pierre was a gray doll settlement, set in the shelter of little gray hills. She could see the riven and castellated crest of Pelee, weaving his black ribbon. It was all small, silent and unearthly.

"That's a fire on the shore," she said. "Exactly," said Laird.

Shortly afterward the trumpeting of the monster began. The harbor grew yellowish-black. The shore crawled deeper into the shroud, and was lost alto-

gether. The water took on a foul look, as if the bed of the sea were churned with some beastly passion. The anchor chain drew taut, mysteriously strained, and banded a tattoo against the steel-banded eye. Blue Peter, drooping at the foremast, livened suddenly into a spasm of writhing, like a hooked lizard. The black, quivering columns of smoke from the funnels were fanned down upon the deck, adding soot to the white smear from the volcano. Lara felt Macready pulling at her arm.

"Ye must go below, miss. Ye know me ordherz."

She rebelled with sudden vehemence, declaring that she would smother down there.

"You can do no good here, sure. Don't make it crool fur me?"

"Make haste below, miss—squall coming!" commanded Laird. Gentleness and jollity were gone from the large red face.

She suffered herself to be drawn down the ladder, crushed by the officer's words, and the iron fingers of fear closing about her heart. A hot, fetid breath charged the air. The water danced, alive with the yeast of worlds. The disordered sky intoned violence. Pelee had set the foundations to trembling.

Lara drifted into the open polar region. Despair. These men were all his friends. She must not hinder them. They had much to do. Her part was self-effacement. In the darkening passageway she heard Laird shouting orders above, heard him command the native women to "tumble below," and the sailors to seal the ways after them, heard the deep sea language and—"barometer" . . . "Constable" . . . There were running feet, bells below, cries from the native women, quick oaths from the sailors. The ship rose and settled like a feather in a breeze.

She was incapable of swift action. Macready lifted her into the cabin and slammed the door, rushed to the ports and screwed them tight with lightning fingers, led her to a chair and locked it in its socket.

"That's the deere," he said breathlessly. "Shud so much as a spark from the mountain raise so much as a blush upon your cheek, sure I'd never be able t' face Mr. Constable again, but go on sthokin' foriver an' iver."

"It's very good of you," she answered dully.

She sat very still, not daring to relax the rigid tension of her face, her hands, or her brain, lest the scream of madness break forth. From out the shoreward darkness thundered vibrations which rendered soundless all that had passed before. Comets flashed by the port holes. The ship shuddered and fell to her starboard side.

Eight bells had just sounded when the great thunder rocked over the gray-black harbor, and the molten vitals of the monster, wrapped in a black cloud, filled the heavens, gathered themselves, and plunged down upon the city and the sea. As for the de Stael, eight miles from shore and twelve miles from the craters, she seemed to have fallen from a habitable planet into the fire-mist of an unfinished world. She heeled over like a biscuit tin, dipping her bridge and gunwales. She was deluged by blasts of steam and molten stone. Her anchor chain gave way, and, burning in a half-dozen places, she was sucked in-shore.

(To be continued.)

An Idol with a Tragic History.

There are many things which happen which do not readily lend themselves to explanation. When Mme. Carnot, widow of Sadi Carnot, died and her will was read, a clause in it caused considerable comment. This was to the effect that a certain small Hindoo idol carved from a hard stone, which would be found among her property, must be taken out and crushed until completely destroyed. Many marveled at this apparently singular request, for the idol seemed a harmless, ugly little thing; but her instructions were carried out to the letter.

The idol had been presented to Sadi Carnot years before he had ever thought of the Presidency of France by a friend who had brought it from India. Later he learned that there was a legend attached to it which asserted that whoever would retain it in his possession would rise to the fullest height of power in his chosen profession, but die of a stab wound when at the zenith of his career. Carnot traced the history of the idol and found that for 500 years the rulers who had possessed it had all died either in battle or by assassination of stab wounds. Yet he laughed at the story, called the facts adduced by his search a mere chain of coincidences and retained the idol. He died by a dagger in the hands of an assassin, hence Mme. Carnot's strange request.

Not So Useless, Either.

"Wildcat mining stocks are not altogether useless—or worthless, either," said a New York broker who handles cheap mining stocks the other day as he hung up the telephone receiver. "Here's a man who just offered me \$50 for enough mining stocks to have a face value of \$50,000. He wasn't particular what stocks he got if they only had a paper value of \$50,000. I closed the deal and shall make money on it, too. What did he want with such stocks? Well, I haven't the slightest doubt but that he is getting ready to go into the bankruptcy court and wants to show his creditors where his money has been dropped. We often get such requests and are usually able to fill them."

To do it no more, is the true repentance.—Luther.

FARM AND GARDEN

Dairy Idols.

Cows become favorites with the owners not altogether by reason of the milk they produce. We have known cows that their owners thought a great deal of because of the kindly disposition of the animals. One cow that the writer remembers I've but a few quarts of milk a day but she was a pet of the family. She would prefer the company of members of the family rather than that of other cows. If the cows were being taken to pasture she would insist on walking by the side of the one in charge of the herd. It is hard to order a cow of this kind sent to the butcher, and many people will not do it. Instead, the animals are kept for a dozen years, and not only allowed to eat up the provender without returning a compensation for it, but are allowed to add to the herd more cows after their own ability not to produce milk. These may fairly be called dairy idols. Their owners claim great things for them without being able to substantiate the truth of what they say.

But the family pet is not the only brand of dairy idol. There are the general purpose cows that quite generally have the entire confidence of their owners as to their great value. They are idols that the single-purpose cow men have demolished again and again, to their own satisfaction, but they are still to be found all over the land.

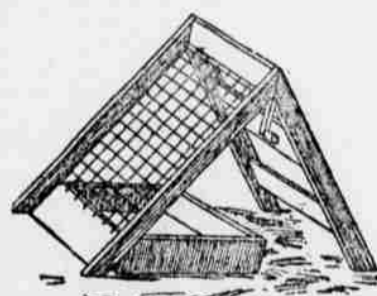
The dairy idol is a thing that can be dispensed with to the advantage of the owners of the cows. The warfare against them will be kept up, and little by little the factors we are warring against will disappear. It may, however, take about as long to eliminate them as it took Christianity to drive the idols out of the pagan world.—Farmers' Review.

Risk in Drenched Cattle.

Doctor David Roberts, State Veterinarian of Wisconsin, gives this advice: "Perhaps the best way of demonstrating the danger of drenching cattle is to advise the reader to throw back his head as far as possible and attempt to swallow. This you will find to be a difficult task, and you will find it more difficult and almost impossible to swallow with the mouth open. It is for this reason that drenching cattle is a dangerous practice. However, if a cow's head be raised as high as possible and her mouth kept open by the drenching bottle or horn, a portion of the liquid is very apt to pass down the windpipe into the lungs, sometimes causing instant death by smothering, at other times causing death to follow in a few days from congestion or inflammation of the lungs. Give all cattle their medicine hypodermically or in feed. If they refuse feed give it dry on the tongue. The proper method of giving a cow medicine is to stand on the right side of the cow, placing the left arm around the nose and at the same time opening her mouth, and with a spoon in the right hand place the medicine, which should be in a powdered form, back on the tongue; she can then swallow with safety."

Handy for Sorting Potatoes.

In sorting potatoes a time-saver can be made of boards and common wire. The best wire should be smooth and about the thickness of ordinary clothes



FOR SORTING POTATOES.

line. The side-boards should be about 18 inches wide to keep the potatoes from rolling off the sides. The wires are fastened to a pulley at the top to tighten them so they will not sag and let the large potatoes through. Shovel the potatoes in at the top and the small potatoes will drop through the screen into the box.

To Fatten Fowls.

Shut the fowls up in a darkened place with just enough light for them to see to eat, and feed on cornmeal, ground oats, cracked wheat and shorts, which may be mixed in equal proportions and scalded. Feed as often during the day as they will eat up the food clean. That is to say, stuff them. Take a light and feed again just before your bedtime, and as early in the morning as possible. Supply them with grit and water and keep the premises clean. Half a dozen fowls together will fatten more quickly than a

large number, as they will not for company. Cooked potatoes, rice, corn-bread, cracked corn and whole wheat may also be fed. Give no green stuffs, as it is too filling and will do no good. Fowls crowded this way should be in fine condition in two weeks. Shut up longer, they are likely to begin to mope and will go back rather than increase in weight.—Rural World.

Nutrient in Milk.

Bulletin No. 51 from the Storrs Agricultural Experiment Station, Connecticut, is a most excellent one on the origin or sources of those small organisms called bacteria, which are found so abundantly in milk. The bulletin also contains some rather startling statements and some wholesome suggestions.

Among the statements which ought to make the average man sit up and think are the following:

"A quart of milk at 8c is equivalent in food value to a pound of beef at 18c. This means that 4c worth of milk gives as much food energy in the body as 9c worth of beef."

"The average individual consumes three or four times as much meat in a day as the body actually needs for repair, and for its highest physical condition."

"If the American people would eat one-half less meat and consume one-half more milk, they would save about \$150,000,000, in money and in health, enough to make the doctors' bills look small."

Improved Hog Pen.

A large hog pen with space for both sleeping and feeding can be arranged with a floor on one-half to ensure a



PEN WITH SECTIONAL FLOOR.

dry bed. The size of the whole pen is 8 feet by 16 feet, so that the floored section of the pen is 8 feet square. It is made of strong materials, usually 2 in. by 4 in. stuff, and rests on cleats in the bottom of the pen.

Water for Cows.

It is claimed that a cow needs eight gallons of water a day, and will consume that much if it is within reach. Milk is composed of about 87 per cent water. Cows confined to pastures in which there is no running water and the cows are watered morning and night, it would necessitate that a cow would have to drink four gallons at a time in order to be supplied. As the cow does not know that she must drink four gallons, she will naturally use less and reduce her milk supply accordingly.

The Milk Machine.

There is mighty little sentiment about a cow. She's nothing but a delicately organized milk-making machine. Her nervous organization is well developed, though, and is easily disturbed, but if she is well supplied with milk-making material and is let alone she will turn out a good product and plenty of it, provided, of course, she is built on the right lines. A poor machine of any kind is a curse to the owner.

Money in Irrigation.

Two hundred feet of the levee on the San Joaquin River in California gave way and flooded 4,000 acres of growing crops, causing a loss of \$5,000,000. Crops worth \$1,250 an acre are not rare in an irrigated district, though the figures above given would look like a misprint to an Easterner. About 300 acres of the inundated area were in celery, and the value would run far above the average stated.—El Paso Herald.

Milk Vessels.

Use no wooden milk vessels, and after washing milk vessels set them out to dry scalding hot. Never rinse out with cold water after the final scalding. Leave them hot, so they will dry quickly and not get musty.

Notes on Orchard Work.

Select only standard varieties. Spray frequently and thoroughly. Clover crops prevent soil washing. Sell direct to the consumer whenever possible. Form strong symmetrical heads on all trees.

Prepare the ground the fall previous to planting. Supply an abundance of plant food at all times.

Clover crops perform many useful functions.

Fruit farming has been styled gentlemen's farming. Poultry and fruit growing make a good combination.

The finest fruit is grown by thinning the fruit on the trees.

Sow clover crops so that they will be thick and cover the ground.

Keep up to date by reading what the most successful men have to say.

Fruit growing and fruit eating make people sunny, happy and sweet.