

The White Sepulchre

The Tale of Pelee

BY WILL LEVINGTON COMFORT

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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 burning volcano, as he pointed out. You will find that I am right, Lara. Mr. Constable is not even a worthy accomplice to the talented Stansbury. 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 rumbles were constant. Lara was suffering to fight out her battle alone. She asked no more than this. A thousand times she paced across her room; scores of victims 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 field track of flying, futile agonies. In the evening the intermittent rumbles 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 availed 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 inconstant, 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 moment. Her mother's figure barred the open doorway.

CHAPTER X.

Constable had been physically unhurt 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 glass-structure of hermal 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, during the first night of acquaintance, 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 Noyes, countermanding sailing orders, and enclosing 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 use. 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 when 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 had 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 explained 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 the 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 bridle. Despite the protestations of 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 attitude 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 despatched.

"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 reference to the Frenchman's fear, as a reference to 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 least. 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 ones, 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, sulken, startled and pitiful, he glanced beyond to the place where old Volcan lay, muttering his agonies. The sight completed the circuit of reading voltage, made him think of Lara. With furious zeal he grappled the work at hand, forced his way out of the crowd, crossed the Roseine 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 short slopes 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-bung 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 ghostly pall, the hidden, tortured city, tranced under the cobra-head of the monster and already lured in its poison. The trail became very steep at two thousand feet, and this fact, together with the lack-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 growling 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 reveled 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 smeared with fresh scars. The crust was made by the dry whirling winds playing upon the paste formed of steam-dust and condensed steam. The clucking whirr, 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 and clinging to the beard of a giant. Up, knees and hands, he crawled—up over the throbbing chis, to the black pounded lip of the monster. Out of the old lake coiled the furious tower of steam and rock-dust which mushroomed from high air, like the primal nebulae from which the worlds were made. Pockets of gas exploded in the heights, reaching 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 hands—the same thought which Hayden Breen evoked 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 ranted 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 hared 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.)

English House Names.

Home owners are sometimes rather unfortunate in their selection of names for their abodes, and in suburban house naming is occasionally rather ludicrous. Thus "The Maples" has never a maple near. "The Rosery" only exists in imagination. "Sunnyside" at the most depressing villa residence, and houses named after the English lakes no more suggest the lake district than Fleet street suggests the Bois de Boulogne. The Anglo-Saxon word "hurst," signifying a forest or wood, has become "hurst" in house naming, and "wood" and "holt" have the same meaning. All house names ending with these terminations are pretty and not unsafe to choose.

It is curious to note that in Hastings and St. Leonards quite a number of houses have typically Saxon names, perhaps to commemorate the great Saxon tragedy of which the name Hastings is reminiscent.

Poles of the Earth.

The circle of the earth's daily rotation upon its axis being the greatest at the equator, the consequent great action there of the centrifugal force during the period when the earth was a yielding mass produced a bulging out of the surface in the equatorial region, with a consequent flattening at the poles. Thus we have an oblate spheroid, with the length of the axis of the poles about twenty-six and a half miles less than the equatorial diameter.

Lack Night 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

FARM AND GARDEN

Select Breed 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 gaged. 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 75 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 gaged 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-



BIRD'S 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 dog 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.

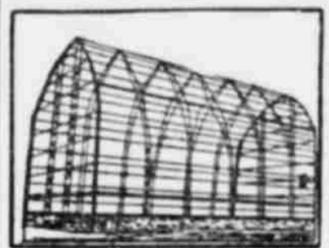
From experience of feeders at the experiment stations the pig increases with greatest profit until 6 or 7 months old, when it has reached the maximum. After that the gains require a larger amount of grain to produce a given amount of pork, and they should be fattened and disposed of.

One bushel of corn made thirteen and one-third pounds of pork at 4 months old, at 7 months old one bushel made 15.2 pounds, and at 8 months old one bushel made 12.6 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



STEEL FRAME FOR BARN.

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 a depth of 9 inches, would weigh about 3,000,000 pounds, and contain nitrogen, 200 pounds; potash, 4,000 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.

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.

Take a Nap At Noon.

It's a good plan to stretch out on the lounge or the grass at noon and take a nap. If it is only five or fifteen minutes it will count big in the day's work. Let your neighbor rush out to the field if he chooses; you will beat him on the season's work by taking care of your strength.

Notes from the Dairy.

Bad cream will never make good 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 souper milk is set in a cool place ready for the cream to rise the more cream there will be.

Not only the flavor, but the keeping quality of butter is injured by keeping the cream until it gets very sour.

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

If the salt is not well mixed through the butter it will crystallize on the outside and probably make the butter streaked.

Milk pans and pails are all the better for a good sun bath in a sweet, airy place after having been washed, scalded and dried.

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.

Consumption of cigarettes increased largely in the United States during the last fiscal year ended June 30, 1916, according to the preliminary annual statement of internal revenue receipts. Tobacco revenues generally fell off the preceding year, taking less stuff and chewing less. But more cigarettes of all kinds were used.

Less spirits were used than in 1917, the heaviest falling off being in the spirits distilled from grain, the revenue on which declined over \$15,000,000. This would indicate large decline in whisky consumption. The beer business, however, continued to grow in spite of the depression.

The total decrease in internal revenue, as compared with the preceding fiscal year, was \$17,908,072.

Origin of the Coolness.

Emeralds—I don't care much for automobile riding.
Gwendolen—I suppose not; the chauffeur can't manage the machine with one hand.

Concerning Mrs. Jypes.

Mrs. Goodsole—What satisfaction does Mrs. Jypes derive from her new automobile? I never see her riding in it.

Miss Capricorn—She isn't deriving any satisfaction from it now. The Goodsoles have bought a finer one.

Class Quarters.

The following extract from a letter of thanks is cherished by its recipient: The beautiful clock you sent us is in perfect condition, and is now in the parlor on top of the book shelves, where we hope to see you soon, and your husband, also, if he can make it convenient.

Too Attractive.

Mrs. Jenner Lee Oodges—Getting ready to move again? Why, you told me when you rented these apartments that they were the most desirable you had ever occupied.

Mrs. Sheldon-Holmes—Yes; they are altogether too desirable. They have been entered by burglars five times since we moved into them.

The Robin's Epitaph.

The two little granddaughters of Dr. S. Weir Mitchell were showing a new government's treasures of house and garden. Behind a box hedge they paused.

"This is the place where our birds are buried," said one of the children. At the head of a tiny grave was placed a white board. Printed on it in irregular characters with a lead pencil were these words:

"Here lie our Robins; one a week old, one only an egg."—Lippincott's

Next in Order.

"We must do something to preserve the trees!" exclaimed the summer boarder.

"Well," answered Farmer Cornmeal, "we've been preservin' tomatoes and watermelon rinds an' most everything else. I don't see why we should draw the line at trees."—Washington Star.

Terminated.

"Last time I heard about Kit Skimmerhorn she was engaged to a young man she met at a seaside resort. How long did the engagement last?"

"Three days, I believe. Then the young man began to insist on their marrying."

Well!

"Well, it was near the end of the season, and she married him."

An Overrated Philosopher.

"Aesop couldn't have been so very wise after all!"

No?

"Of course not. If he had been he never would have sold his birthright for that mess of pottage."—Kansas City Times.

Depends.

"Can a man get a good bargain in a farm in this neighborhood?"

"Want to buy one?"

Yes.

"Know anything about the farm around here?"

No.

"Can you pay cash?"

Yes.

"Well, you can get some splendid bargains if you'll offer just about one-third of the prices they'll ask you."

Habitual Constipation

May be permanently overcome by proper personal efforts with the assistance of the one truly beneficial laxative remedy, Syrup of Figs and Elixir of Senna, which enables one to form regular habits daily so that assistance to nature may be gradually dispensed with when no longer needed as the best of remedies, when required, are to assist nature and not to supplant the natural functions, which must depend ultimately upon proper nourishment, proper efforts, and right living generally. To get its beneficial effects, always buy the genuine Syrup of Figs and Elixir of Senna manufactured by the CALIFORNIA FIG SYRUP CO. ONLY SOLD BY ALL LEADING DRUGGISTS. See our only, regular price 50¢ per bottle.