The Whited Sepulchre

The Tale of Pelee

By Will Levington Comfort

CHAPTER XVII.—(Continued.)

All that had been serene partook of strange disorder now. Negley should have made an effort ere this to reach him. The power that devastated the city and with unspent violence swept the morne might have reached three leagues at sea! Save that the gray was unchangeable in the roof of the world, he could not believe that all this was one day. * * * Lara would never forgive him for being whole, at the price of her mother's eyes! There seemed no adjustment possible for this cruel play of his service. * * * He called the mother's name softly, but his words made no impress—called in frenzy at last, and felt her shudder in his arms.

"Boy!"

"Yes, yes."

"Tell Lara that there was no yesterday—no last night! And leave me here—in the dark!"

How long afterwards he never knew, but he awoke to find himself uttering incoherent sentences. The woman was quite dead. * * * The hours drew on into eternity, but the gray still lived in the sky. He loosened his arm, and the blood rushing into the strained limb bore with it a thrashing pain. The water had cooled, but he did not put his burden down. He had not yet fathomed the extent of her surrender, nor the signet and color of her personality upon every word she had spoken. * * * He heard a cry from Lara, and deemed it the encroachment of personal madness. Scornfully he answered. Again the voice of the woman! He arose and called her name. A shadow darkened the orifice, and he saw his lady in the sky.

It may be in this marvelous world, where men carry on their wars and their woolings, some pursuing their little ways of darkness, some bursting into blooms of valor and tenderness—it may be that after the most exalted passage of agony and terror, two of Earth's people were returned to each other in the strangeness of these. One swooning at the curb of an ancient cistern, under the hot leaden sky, the falling sea before, and Pelee, with his tens of thousands slain, on her right hand; the other in the pit below, standing in the cooling water, and calling upon her to forgive him for failing in that which only the gods could do. It may be that in the collection of Earth's tableaux another such film is curled away—from another age and another cataclysm.

"Niver you worry your hearrt, sorr," called Macready, to whom the voice of his friend had brought imperious consciousness, man-wise, instead of collapse. "Th' faint is nothin'. 'Tis a fortune fur thim as can faint fur joy, an' no hurrt in ut, sorr. Have you th' strent' t' do th' overhand up th' chain, wit' th' fairest av tin t'ousand at th' top, sorr?"

Constable placed his burden upon the stone slabs, caught the chain, and pulled himself free from the water. His weight was a mountain. The five days had done what four had not—played havoc with the one hundred and ninety pounds of manhood which struggled upward under Macready's cheers, and fell across the rim of the cistern into Macready's arms.

Lara awoke and found Constable bending over her. Her eyes rested upon his lacerated hand, upon the swollen veins in his throat and temples. She saw blood upon his clothing, blisters upon his neck, sweat and mire upon his face. * * * The reality came that he was praying for her to forgive him—because her mother had died in his arms.

"Peter, my beloved!" she murmured. "You say—that mother——"

She halted, for the grief uprose in its fullness in her mind. The day had put a look of horror in her eyes that months would not efface. * * * But there was no mortal hurt upon her. Her nostrils, lips, hands—all moved in their way of dear perfection. Some time she would see that he had done his best. * * * Though he had failed in all else, he had saved this masterpiece from harm.

"But if I had not come back, she never would have known," he pleaded. "And she forgave me—I'm quite sure—as you'll forgive me——"

"What are you saying?" she cried suddenly. "What do you mean? It is horrible, but I came thinking to find you all lying here—as they are in the city—all dead and down—and I have found my lover living!"

Macready and Ernst, afar off, watched the puffs of smoke and steam rise like gray-white birds from the ruins.

"Ernst, lad," said the other, "th' boss an' th' l'adin' lady are havin' an intellechoual repasht in th' cinter av th' sta-age, he th' ould well. Bear in mind you're a chorus gurrl, an' conduct yoursilf in accord."

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Madame was steaming down from Basse Terre to Saint Pierre. It was the third morning after the tragic eighth of May. On the evening after the eruption the ship had touched Fort de France, and left the natives there to join Father Damien's colony. Then the Madame was dispatched to Dominica, where Constable cabled to New York for officers and men to complete the ship's company, and succeeded also in reaching Mr. Stansbury by cable, with the word that his daughter had been saved, before the planter could get passage for the Whited Sepulchre.

Constable and Lara were sitting together at the cabin door in the sunlight and soft winds. The girl wore a robe purchased ready-made in Basse Terre. It was white and lustrous, a strange native fabric, which the man regarded with selectness and awe. This was an item in the first consignment of feminine apparel he had ever had the honor to purchase. The joy was full and rare.

"I come to you empty-handed and very soiled from the heat of the journey, sir," she had told him; "but father will reimburse you."

"Father will be allowed certain privileges, but not that," he had replied, and many were the booties, flounces, ribands, and mysteries which they drew, together and apart, from the treasure houses of little Basse Terre.

Peter was in white, too, of a freshness only found on shipboard. His right hand was in the swathed state which denotes repairs, and a thickness of lint was fitted under his collar. There was, too, a drawn look about his mouth and eyes, to which the recuperative forces had not yet attended. Negley, multifariously bandaged, was on the bridge, in company with a new officer, secured temporarily at Dominica. The captain was unable to walk, but signified his intention of healing above decks. Constable was regarding the sad face before him, and the beauty of it had made him dumb for several moments.

"Lara," he said finally, "we'll make the pilgrimage together to Saint Pierre—or the place!"

"She was very beautiful and very proud—our mother!" the girl whispered unsteadily. "She told you to leave her there—in the dark, so that we would never see—how changed she was. I know—how she felt."

Lara, Peter and Crusoe made their arduous way up the cluttered road into the Rue de Rivoli. A smoky charnal, Saint Pierre, made human only by the lamentations of those who had come down for their dead from Morne Rouge and the hills. The wind was still; and the sun shone through silent towers of smoke, and it was noon. No one had spoken for several minutes. The fruit shop had fallen in part. The stone arch remained, although the wooden door had been levelled and partly devoured by fire. Crusoe remained outside with Lara, while Peter went in to see if the place was safe. They heard his steps upon the stones, the rattle of falling plaster. The waiting was long before he appeared and beckoned. They followed him into the little stone shop. A breath of coolness still lingered in the dim place, and the fruity odor of spilled wine. The ash-covered floor was packed hard, and still was damp from the gusts of rain through the open door and the broken-backed roof. Steady as a clock ticking there was heard the "drip, drip" from somewhere among the merciful shadows, where the old soldier of France was sitting.

"Lara, dearest, I should have spared you this. Must you go farther?" Peter whispered. "Crusoe and I will be only a moment."

"I am going, too," the girl answered.

The three climbed over the heap of stones, which was the rear doorway, and entered the court from whence the song birds had flown. Across the drifts of ash, into the dark beyond, they made their way, Constable leading, Crusoe last.

They were sitting together—the lovers. She had been listening, like Desdemona, as he "spake of most disastrous chances—battles, sieges, fortunes." Sorconia had been the first to see the sinister face of Iago at the door! She had bent forward and covered in her arms the face of her soldier, her painter of pictures. * * * Thus they had fallen—the adventurer in the shelter of the golden vine. Pelee had covered them with dust—each particle of covering dust fresh-wrought from the fire in which the stars were forged.

"Don't touch, Crusoe!" Peter warned.

Something in the tone caused the man who was accustomed to do as he pleased to forbear from his investigations. After all, his own life had been spared because Constable had taken him captive, and the trip had paid. Crusoe did not understand what was between the millionaire and the revolutionist. It occurred to him at last that this something must have been greater even than dollars; yet he was not sure. The look upon Constable's face as he led the woman into the sunlight was that of fortunes lost! Crusoe left them there, and made his own way back to Fort de France, to wait for his ship. He was happy to be alive, but he carried a crowning mystery in his brain. This had to do with a millionaire's generosity on the one hand, and a millionaire's perversity on the other. After all, he acknowledged that he knew less of Constable than when he left New York.

Peter and Lara had descended nearly to the shore when she said: "If your strange friend had not come into our lives, we could never have known each other as we do now. We might have loved and gone our way, without knowing all that it means to be human, without knowing all that our hearts could make us do."

"It all worked out like a mosaic for you and me, Lara. Our valiants fell about us, but we were left. Always in our greatest need a man arose to help—Breen, Negley, Ernst, little Denny——"

"Was there work for Pugh to do?" she asked.

"Ah, Pugh—the weak sister! He kept you from going into the harbor too soon! I shall pay him and let him go his way to-night in Fort de France. The sea is a strange mistress to mother two such sons as the lion Negley and the poor little jackal Pugh! * * * Sweetest Lady, I am in love with you and the world! Bear witness that I forgive Pugh—aye, forgive Mondet! See, down the Rue Victor—the wreck of Les Colonies! The little editor was there, perhaps, writing his paragraphs on the stanchness of Pelee! * * * Once, Lara, my mother said, 'Peter, some time you will breathe the breath of life!' I know what she meant now. I wonder how she knew?"

"Mothers are close to the heart of things."

There were tears in her eyes. To the right of them, among the ruins, a wailing woman had found her own.

They had traversed the Morne d'Orange. The sun bathed the fields. The wreck of the great plantation house was hunched closer to the ground. As he neared the rim of the cistern, Peter halted suddenly by the stricken llanas, and beckoned Lara back. The well curbing was broken away, and the earth for yards surrounding had caved into the pit.

"Mondet was right, after all, about the earthquake," he said.

Without speaking, they stood there for several moments. Then Peter took her hand and led her back toward the boat at the Sugar Landing.

Night had fallen. Up through the streets of the capital, they strode, the man and woman. Casements were open to the stars and the sea, but the people were dull with grief. Martinique had lost her first-born, and Fort de France, the gentle sister of Saint Pierre, was bowed in the spirit of weeping. They had loved and leaned on each other, this boy and girl of the mother island.

Through the silent crowds Peter and Lara walked, a part of the silence, passing the groves and towers, where the lawn of France are born again for the little aliens; treading streets of darkness and morning, streets of light and tears. A field of firelights shone ahead, their red glow shining upon new canvas. This was the little colony of Father Damien—brands plucked from the burning of Saint Pierre. They passed the edge of the bivouac. A woman sat nursing her babe, firelight upon her face and breast, drowsy little ones about her. Coffee and night-air and quavering lullabies; above all, beautiful Josephine in marble, smiling dreamily among the stars. It was the most potent instant of Constable's life; some great joy or thrilling tragedy was breathing upon his heart. He saw a tear upon the cheek of Lara. The voice of Father Damien came from the distance:

"Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God hath already accepted thy works. Let thy garments be always white; and let not thy head lack ointment. Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest, all the days of thy life——"

There was a cry from behind. It was from the lips of the woman with the babe at her breast. She had caught the garments of Lara in her hands, and, half kneeling, with her face toward Peter, she exclaimed in a voice of joy:

"He is come! He is come!"

The silent camp uprose with a shout of gladness. The remnant of Saint Pierre pressed about the man and woman, crying, laughing, kissing their hands. Constable had not dreamed of such glorifying gratitude; and yet he was humbled to tears. These were so few, and Saint Pierre so vast!

"Father Damien," he said, when his voice came to him, "we are come to take you out to our ship——"

"Not on the ship, but here—now!" the old priest cried. "It is the moment of ten thousand years!"

And so they were restored to each other, in the midst of their devoted, in the fire-light, beneath the Seven Palms and the blessings of the Empress.

(The End.)

OUR GOLD INDUSTRY.

Immensity of It Is Hard to Grasp by Even Close Observers.

An eagle, a $10 goldpiece, is just about one inch in diameter. Imagine a glittering yellow ribbon of $10 goldpieces lying edge to edge, beginning at San Francisco and extending eastward through the Sacramento valley of California, across the lofty Sierra Nevada mountains, spanning the great American desert in Nevada and, over the prairies of Wyoming and Nebraska, across the green fields of Iowa and Illinois, over Indiana and Ohio, through the hills of New York and Massachusetts, and out into the Atlantic Ocean, half way to the British Isles—imagine, edge to edge, without break or interruption, over this vast stretch of land and sea, a distance which consumes at least eight days in the swiftest express trains and ocean steamers—and you will be able to form some conception of the amount of gold that has been produced in the United States, says Leslie's Weekly.

It requires some such illustration as this to grasp the immensity of the gold industry, to form some definite idea of the importance and magnitude of the gold production of the North American continent.

The profits from the gold industry are magnificent. They are greater than in any other department of commercial activity. The figures of the world's production are enormous. In 1907 the output of the gold mines of the earth amounted to nearly half a billion dollars. Of this vast sum more than $200,000,000 was net profit. No other industry can make such a showing as this. This gold was found in America, in Mexico, in South Africa, in Australia, and elsewhere.

This huge sum of profits, more than $200,000,000, was distributed to scores of thousands of people.

Farm and Garden

The Rural Home.

So important has agriculture become to the nation's prosperity that President Roosevelt recently appointed a commission to suggest means to make the rural home more attractive and assist in keeping young men on the farm. Many of the conveniences that add comfort to a city home could be installed in the country residence.

The farmer possesses an advantage over the majority of residents in cities in that he owns his own home and is nominally the dictator of his surroundings. In cities dwellers are crowded into apartment buildings for the want of space for private residences and to secure economy in living expenses. The owners of apartment houses have installed steam heat, porcelain bath fixtures, gas stoves, electric lights and maintain the apartments at great expense on account of the costly fixtures and the frequency of repairs. The tenant forms no attachment to his home and is ready to change his residence when other apartments are discovered that more fully suit his fancy.

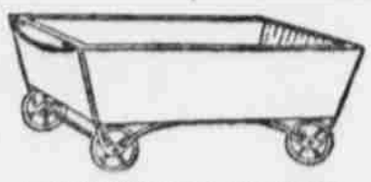
In the country the rural home is permanent and all its improvements are consummated with a view to the future as well as the present generation. In no other profession does the home dweller enjoy the work of his hands as in agriculture. If man is what he makes himself, so the rural home reflects the owner's idea of beauty and convenience. With the land producing increased crops and agricultural products selling at record prices the farmer can afford to adorn his home and improve it with many modern and sanitary appointments.

The water supply may come from a shallow, inconveniently located well and the supply may be contaminated by surface seepage containing the microbes of typhoid fever and other diseases. The water supply is the great source of health, cleanliness and convenience on the farm. Tubular wells are permanent and of cheap construction and their depth furnishes living water free from germ diseases. With a windmill and tank the water can be piped into the house at small expense and a supply furnished at all times by turning the faucet. A hot-water heater can be attached to the stove and hot water provided without additional expense for fuel.

With ample grounds a beautiful lawn could easily be arranged with ornamental trees, flowers and shrubbery that would outrival the homes of city dwellers. With the installation of modern conveniences at small expense rural homes can be made ideal for comfort and thus stimulate contentment among the younger generation to follow the greatest of all professions—agriculture.—Goodall's Farmer.

Convenient Barn Truck.

No dairyman can afford to ignore that which will lighten his labor in any way whatever. Be his stable ever so conveniently constructed, he has enough to do. Hence the importance of his considering the truck or car presented in the cut. Made of good lumber, the only iron about it is the handle at each end, by which to push or pull it along the feeding alley in front of the cows which are to be fed, and the trucks on which it is mounted. The wheels procured, any good blacksmith can make this, so that the truck is by no means difficult to construct. It should be about 2 feet wide, 20 inches deep and 4½ feet long. Silage can be conveyed in it from the silo to the mangers very readily. If the silo is some distance away it will save much hard work, indeed.—Fred O. Sibley, in Farm and Home.



FEEDING TRUCK FOR THE STABLE.

Produce Prices Going Higher.

From the figures of a report by the bureau of labor there has been extracted the interesting fact that sale prices of nearly everything reached a higher level last year than at any time during the last eighteen years, and the farm produce leads all the rest.

The bureau divides the 258 commodities of the country into nine groups and farm produce showed the highest increase in price attained by any of the groups. And the encouraging feature of the report is that the panic of last year did not affect prices of farm stuff very much. In fact, taking everything sold, the farmer got more money in 1907 than the average of ten years before.

Som farmers may not know this, but it is true, because Mr. Powderly's bureau says so. Aside from the musty figures of a departmental report, the fact is evident that the farmers of this country are more prosperous than they have ever been. It is shown in better houses, bigger barns, fatter bank accounts, fewer mortgages, better machinery, and, more important than anything else, higher standard of living for the family.

There is one small fly in the ointment, however, and that is the fact that while farm produce has been raising in price, clothing, implements, lumber and building materials, house furnishing goods and some other things farmers must buy have gone up, too.

But as these commodities have not kept pace with the advance in the price of things the farmers have to sell they may on the whole feel that they are gaining ground and that agriculture is not to be despised.

Handling Alfalfa's Crop.

Methods of handling the alfalfa crop from the time of seeding until it is in the barn in the form of well-cured hay are given by the Wisconsin Station bulletin. In brief, it is as follows: The best soil for alfalfa is a rich clay loam over a gravelly subsoil. It is best on well-cultivated soils. If the nitrogen forming bacteria are not in the soil, the soil should be inoculated. Spring sowing is the best. Where ground is inclined to be weedy use a nurse crop, barley sown at the rate of three pecks to the acre being the best. Thin seeding of the nurse crop is preferable. Twenty pounds of alfalfa seed per acre is recommended. The year following the seeding three good crops of hay can be expected. Cut when about one-tenth of plants are in bloom and on a morning after the dew has disappeared on a day that promises fair weather. Cut stubble at least an inch high. In the afternoon of the day cut, rake and put into small cocks. These cocks can be covered with light cotton duck caps and left until the hay is thoroughly cured.

To Kill Quack Grass.

Quack grass is sometimes known as Johnson grass, and also by other names. It is useless to attempt to get rid of it after the land has been planted to a crop. Now is a good time to consider fighting it. Plow the land late in the fall, just before winter begins. Plow just deep enough to get under the roots, leaving as much of them as possible exposed to the frost of winter. These exposed roots will be destroyed. In the spring harrow or rake over the roots repeatedly, doing the work over and over again until almost every root is removed, and then plant the soil to potatoes or corn and give thorough cultivation.

Hog Mange.

The following simple remedies are offered as cures for mange in hogs: 1. Creosote, one and one-half ounces; lard, two pounds; mix well and apply to affected parts. 2. Sulphur, one and one-half pounds; lard, two pounds; mix well and apply as above. 3. Turpentine and sulphur at the rate of ten parts of the former to one of the latter is likewise said to be an effective remedy.

Helps in the Farm Home.

When through using a tool, or machine, put it up.

Young ewes should as a rule never be bred under 14 months.

Little leakages cause big losses in the aggregate. Remember that.

Bacon is fine when baked in the oven. Pour off the grease frequently.

Watch the butter milk and be sure you are not losing lots of butter fat.

A bit of alcohol on a soft cloth will make your glasses shine and save your eyes.

Feed the horses regularly. Irregular feeding encourages boiting of food, leading to indigestion.

A slate hung in the kitchen is a very handy thing on which to note things to be ordered from town.

Don't forget that charcoal is good for the hogs, salt, also. Have it where they can help themselves.

Large animals consume less pounds of dry material per 1,000 pounds live weight than do small ones.

It is no longer a question: Does the silo pay? Rather, what is the best method of handling the silo?

The road horse stuffed with hay makes a poor traveler. Feed light on hay and heavier on oats when using the horses much.

Kerosene will start a stove fire all right, but no wise woman will use it. Dry corncobs are nearly as good and a great deal safer.

Dipping the ends or corners of articles to be hung on the clothes line in very strong salt water will prevent the part from freezing and makes it easy to put on the clothespins.

Invite your neighbor to have dinner with you occasionally and never fail to go out when you are invited. We all get tired of home cooking in time and a change is a good thing.

The man who can say "yes" and "no" at the right time has a sufficient command of language.

[illegible] or glove cutting requires great skill, and in France some of the [illegible] workmen are paid $100 a week.

Australia exports 24,000,000 rabbit skins a year. To kill this great number costs about $325,000.

Dr. Joseph Sande, the royal dentist to the Khedive of Egypt, studied surgery in Chicago for three years.

Wages in the machine factories of Germany advanced last year 10 to 15 per cent.

The Japanese have established a steamship line connecting their ports with Chile.

Dresden has opened a bathing establishment for dogs. It is owned and governed by the municipality.

About 44,000 square miles of arable land are available in Cuba for sugar culture.

Hadn't Forgotten.

Miss Screecher—I wonder if Uncle Jim remembered me when he made his will? I used to sing for him.

Lawyer—Yes, he evidently remembered you—at least your name isn't mentioned in the document.

Thirst for Knowledge.

"I will wait a few moments," said the lecturer, who had delivered an eloquent and instructive address on "The High Mission of Women in Our Modern Civilization," "to answer any question that may be asked."

"There's one thing I'd like to know, Mr. Croxton," spoke up a dyspeptic looking man with a thin, straggling beard. "Where do they get the names for all these breakfast foods?"

The Only Way.

"This bathing pool on the lot you sold me is a fake," blustered the irate purchaser.

"In what way, sir?" asked the crafty real estate agent.

"Why, you told me I would find the water up to my neck. Instead of that I find it only 12 inches deep."

"Well, er—I meant you would find it up to your neck, sir, if you jumped in head first."