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The White Sepulchre

The Tale of Pelee

BY WILL LEVINGTON COMFORT

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CHAPTER VI.

Constable remembered turning into the driveway after his terrific exertion; he remembered that the girl and her mother were standing upon the veranda; that the former stretched out her hand to help him and the elder woman released a cutting remark. Then a servant brought a chair, and billows of nausea surged over him. Just as his consciousness waned, and he was launching, chair and all, into space, Lara's voice reached him again. "You're in the hallway, through some miracle, and insisting most uncommonly that he was not to be taken into the library, but into the music room, because the windows there commanded the mountain."

He awoke to the interesting discovery that Miss Stansbury was fanning him. Presently she re-chilled a towel in the lead basin and folded it upon his forehead, now deliciously cool. "It's mighty sweet of you to take care of me this way," he muttered gratefully. "How is Pelee? How long have I been here? The last I remember, I was lost in the hall, and you found me."

"You've been here about three hours, Mr. Constable. Pelee is quiet again, but the whole world is white outside—a perfect blizzard of ash has fallen! They say a terrible thing has happened at the extreme northern end of the city. The River Branch overflowed her bed at Marquette with the dawn, according to schedule. The thirty people are reported killed and the Usine Guerin destroyed."

She thought he was considering the disaster in the silence which followed, but in reality he was battling with the old problem. "Miss Stansbury," he said finally, "is there anything in my own safety as such a paramount thing. I don't want to be one of Job's lone survivors. Mother and Uncle Joey and you must go—when I do."

"I have taken the liberty to suggest that to mother," Lara replied. "She says that to-morrow will be time enough." "Miss Stansbury, won't you put yourself in the care of Captain Negley to-night? I hope I'm wrong, but the Guerin disaster may be only a preliminary demonstration—like the operator experimenting to find if it is dark enough to start the main fireworks. You know, I would stay ashore, and Negley is a good old man of the sea."

"Don't you understand, Mr. Constable?" she said, in real distress for denying him so repeatedly. "Don't you see that such a thing would bring down a miserable scene upon our heads? Besides, I am not thinking of my own safety as such a paramount thing. I don't want to be one of Job's lone survivors. Mother and Uncle Joey and you must go—when I do."

The pale, searching face regarded her. Again he was silent. His lips were shut, his eyelids half-closed. A swift intuition was borne to the woman. He was about to renew the siege. She was not ready, and shrank from being moved to a decision which she had not formed in the privacy of her own mind. The last two days of suffering had rendered her strangely responsive to his mental actions. His quest had filled her brain with wonders, but they were not yet cooled—impulses and inspirations without unity, unbound as yet by judgment. She wanted to yield with grace, if it came to that, but not to be overthrown. His hand reached for hers, but she drew away.

"Miss Stansbury—"

"Please don't say it now!" she whispered swiftly, her words startling herself quite as much as the man. "These are such dreadful hours! We must think of the crisis—only of that—putting behind all that passed last night!"

"Until?" said Constable, sitting up. "Oh, who can tell? One knows—Mr. Constable, isn't it wicked of you to muddle me this way?"

A smile from him had given her the saving turn. The tension was eased. Now, as he held out his hand to her, she was not slow to accept it, or to miss the meaning of the compact.

"Pelee will be beyond the sky line for us all pretty soon," he said cheerfully. "We'll be very good pals in the meantime. Please go to the window and see how our ogre is firing—the giant who thinks he's going to eat us when we're prime—member the fairy story? By the way, Miss Stansbury, did you ever have a set of billiard balls cracking off caroms on your brain pan?"

"Yes, and ten-pins. Men don't know headache matters. The north is clearer, sir. A little while ago it was all a seething mass of blacks and grays." An exclamation broke from her lips, and Constable joined her at the window. A dozen birds had fallen to the lawn from the eaves. Most of them were dead from the tainted air. The slight brightening of the situation more forcibly than ever to her mind.

"I should think the birds would fly away!" she said pityingly.

"Perhaps the mountain birds are waiting for mails to come in," suggested a voice behind them. Mrs. Stansbury was standing in the hall doorway.

A gracious rain cleared the air of early evening, and Constable settled himself for a further nap at the north window upstairs. He had not realized his ex-

haustion, and was astonished to find that it was midnight when he awoke. He was stronger, but a cyclonic headache still oppressed him. Glad though he was for the hours passed, still he was by no means unappreciative of the chances he had taken. A forlorn hope of saving the lady, even though a destroying eruption overtook them at the plantation house, had grown in his mind since the night before. To be caught asleep would render this chance a fair one.

The Guerin disaster might be considered among the promises of a favorable issue, as well as a forerunner of chaos. The mountain's overflow into the River Branch might have eased the pressure upon the crater. There was no authority no precedent for such a hope. If Pelee's fuse were burning shorter and shorter toward a Krakatoan catastrophe, it was not for man to say what spark would shake the world. Still, Constable held the hope.

He turned on the lights in the room. A telegram had been slipped under the door. It proved to be an answer to a message he had sent to Haxse Terre in the morning, regarding the movements of the Panther.

"Str. Panther arrived and departed here on time,"

he read. There was strength in the word. The mail liner reasonably might be expected to call at Marquette with the dawn, according to schedule. The mails should be ready for distribution at nine.

"We'll have luncheon aboard the Madame to-morrow," Constable mused, "and while the blessed maiden is passing cake and pouring tea, the Madame will be running like a scared deer, to hitch herself to the solid old Horn, built of rock and sealed with lebergs!"

He shaded his eyes at the window, staring beyond the city into the ash shroud—Pelee's flag of truce. "Grand old martyr," he murmured devoutly. "Hang on, hang on!"

There was a tap at the door, and Breen was admitted.

"I haven't seen much of you in the past three weeks, miscalled days," said Constable.

"It is true. I have felt my own in-consequence in the presence of the big drama here. It is your drama, Peter. Then, I have found a place of many marvels."

"Pere Rabaut's?"

"None other. There is something like coolness in this thrice-burned isle. Also a maiden creature, half child, half woman, wholly wonderful."

"I have been glad to see you make the best of things. Of course one can never tell on a cruise where one is to encounter a series of business obligations—such as here."

"True again," Breen said gravely.

"I have been busy as that, but have accomplished nothing. Seriously, Breen, times are running close. Guerin's the first volley. To think I haven't been to the mountains; haven't taken a photograph or a note! My fellow researchers in things scientific will never forgive me for this. Breen, I thought I had a scientific mind—thought that even though I bulled in all else, I was a loyal geologist; but I have betrayed even that decent instinct. Another man would have had the women away to sea and be attending the mountain now; but here I am, a child with man's tools, gassing the night through, and she—across the hall—marked, for all I know, for Pelee's own! It's good to talk, though."

"There's only one way when words fail, Peter. If the mountain won't recede from the maiden, you must snatch up the maiden and make a get-away from the mountain."

"I'm not pirate enough, Breen," Constable replied wearily. "By the way, I'm sending some of the natives of the city—the women with babes—out to the Madame for cool air. There is no reason in the world why we shouldn't entertain our friends of the shop. Soronia is too rare a creature to be immobilized by Pelee's bursting boilers. She and the Pere might just as well share the benefits. You see, the presence of others makes it possible. Attend to it, will you?"

"Good old Peter," Breen said softly; "but I don't think they would come. Who'd feed the little song birds?"

"Have her bring the birds along. They'll die there!"

"I had planned not to go to the little shop again, Peter."

Constable turned upon him abruptly. "Why?" said he.

"You see, Peter, she is such a rare little soul—asking so little and so ready to give her all for the promise of a man—think of it. I have found a good many playthings, pottering around this little sunshot planet—clear little films they are now, which stick in the brain and won't fade. Let me alone, Peter, and I'll wander back to reason presently. A very ugly album is a sinner's memory, and when it is quite full the sinner usually dies—sometimes of Brooklyn piers. The truth is, I found a shred of conscience developed under your culture and Pelee's heat; and so I refused another plaything, refused to crowd another film into that awful album of mine. I lied, said I didn't understand that admiration meant anything to her—and went away. Not too late, I trust. She is a natural optimist, and slow to lose faith in mankind."

Constable believed that Soronia had

found her first lover in Breen, and he pitied the heart so suddenly impassioned and so swiftly dethroned of his dream. He remembered the face of Soronia in the court show, and his pity lingered.

They talked until the Panther lights shone afar in the offing, misty with dawn and volcano fog; then parted for an hour's rest. Constable was the first below, and there was little joy with the coming of the day. The rumblings of the mountain were renewed. The great tower of ash shot up yesterday was still falling; the trees and shrubbery in the gardens were bent with the weight of white; indeed, many branches were broken. The dismal bellowing of cattle and the stamping of ponies were heard from the barns. It was only by keeping the doors and windows of the house tightly shut that living was bearable. The native who brought the copy of Les Colonies was a thick wet rag over his nostrils, and had the appearance of having freshly emerged from a bin of cement. Constable and Breen were first in the breakfast room.

"This pugny editor," Constable declared savagely, as he read the morning paper. "Yesterday I called upon him and in sweet modesty and limping French explained the proper policy for him to take. To-day he devotes a half-column of insufferable humor to my force of character and extreme views."

Constable translated Mondet's account of the Guerin disaster, and his assurances of the safety of Saint Pierre, so far as the mountain was concerned. "Oh, the fashions of that French mind!" he exclaimed. "With a volcano in the pangs of dissolution, towering over the city, is apparently in dread of an earthquake!"

"Where on the island," thus he inquires editorially, "could a more secure place than Saint Pierre be found in the event of an earthquake visitation?"

Constable crushed the paper in his hand. He glanced at his watch and then at the mountain, from a habit now grown deeply.

"The northern end of Saint Pierre is flooded out like an ant hill under a kettle boiling over," he capitulated thoughtfully. "The mountain is gathering for another demonstration. Let us flee with all dispatch to the crater of the volcano, to escape this hypothetical earthquake!"

Mondet certainly enthralled me. I must call upon him again. . . . Breen, is there any way to stimulate the distribution of the Panther mails?"

CHAPTER VII.

Immediately after breakfast Constable drove down to the city to send a final order to Captain Negley, and attend certain matters having to do with the Madame's facilities for entertainment. Uncle Joey was to go for the mails. If he could prevent, Constable was minded that there should be no hitch nor tangle at the last moment. In spite of darkish apprehensions, his heart would burst now and then into singing, since he asked but two hours more of old Pelee, upon whose summit was now written in lightning and black cloud the ominous letters of Disaster.

The ladies were left to such graceful ministrations of Breen as were found useful. Mrs. Stansbury, having gained her point, imposed no further delay. The aggressiveness of the daughter was controlled, but in no way concealed. The past three days had left a pallor upon her face, and shadows under her eyes, but the innate firmness of her features seemed intensified rather than diminished by physical suffering, and the more subtle perturbations of the inner woman.

"When a strain brings out the splendor of a woman's face, mark her well for a thoroughbred," Breen had found occasion to whisper to his friend. The sentence was soul's refreshment, as Breen intended it to be.

Constable, indeed, was contemplating the full significance of the words, and the future, as he rode down the Morne d'Orange into the Rue Victor Hugo. The little black carriage of Father Damien was approaching, and, gripped by a sudden idea, Constable halted it, saying to the elder spirit of the parish, "Father, take this two thousand francs and use it for the maintenance of the homeless refugees in Fort de France. I shall see that more funds get to you to-day."

A little way further, another carriage approached, one of the public conveyances of the city this time. Behind the driver loomed the head and shoulders of a white man—hard head and broad shoulders—the slight of whom struck the music from the brain of Constable, as a knife that is slashed across the strings of a harp. Both vehicles stopped abruptly.

"Well, I've got you," the broad individual remarked cheerfully. "Where's the other fellow?"

Let it be known that the man whom Constable now faced was the same energetic person who occasioned discord on the Brooklyn pier, just as the Madame swung blithely forth into the harbor. Constable was thinking very rapidly. He felt prepared to commit murder rather than have his plans for the morning thrust aside.

"The other fellow?" he repeated gently. "The man hidden in your cabin when you cleared. His name is Nicholas Stembribe, if you don't happen to know." The stranger said, with some impatience, "Where is he?"

"Where you saw him last," Constable said, with sudden cordiality. "and I want to state that I'm glad to see you—that is," he added doubtfully, "if you've come to take him away. If you've looked me up, you'll have found that I'm usually ready to pay in money, hide, or liberty, for the mistakes I make."

(To be continued.)

Buenos Aires has a population of 1,200,000, of which about 80 per cent is foreign, the Italians forming about 60 per cent of the foreign population.

EVENTS OF THE DAY

Newsy Items Gathered from All Parts of the World.

PREPARED FOR THE BUSY READER

Less Important but Not Less Interesting Happenings from Points Outside the State.

Fire at Manila destroyed property valued at \$200,000.

Delegates are gathering for the Trans-Mississippi congress.

Two Americans are among the new cases of cholera at Manila.

A conference of the powers is proposed to avert war over the Balkan trouble.

Delegates from commercial bodies of the principal coast cities are in session at San Francisco.

A number of women attempted to register in New York for the coming election, but were refused.

Wilbur Wright, the American aeronaut in France, carried as a passenger on one flight a man weighing 216 pounds.

The Turkish government does not want to go to war, but will not give up Bulgaria and the other provinces without a struggle.

Wives of the officers of the American fleet are receiving royal entertainment at Tokio while waiting for the fleet to reach Japan.

A mob tried to lynch a negro in court at Los Angeles, but a quick sentence saved him. The negro had assaulted a white girl and was sent to the penitentiary for life.

New cases of cholera are very few at Manila.

Evelyn Nesbit Thaw says her husband is incurable.

Chicago has started a movement to systematically care for its hungry.

Official reports show that the number of cholera cases in Russia are decreasing.

Tests of submarine boats are being conducted by the government at Newport, L. I.

The lumber rate case heard at San Francisco has been referred to the supreme court.

The state land commissioner of Minnesota says none of the best timber has been burned.

For the first time in a number of months the Burlington shops are running on full time.

Chinese steamship companies are endeavoring to secure a portion of the Pacific coast business.

So far cost of prosecution of Thaw for the shooting of Stanford White is said to have been \$54,837.

Taxicab drivers of New York have gone on strike for better pay. Many strikebreakers are said to be available.

Deaths from the flood in India are now estimated at 50,000.

A son of Admiral Evans must stand court-martial on several charges.

Longworth proposes that Roosevelt run for president eight years from now.

San Francisco saloonmen accuse one of the police captains of attempted extortion.

Six persons were injured at Los Angeles by the collision of a switch engine and an electric car.

The Turkish army is moving toward the Bulgarian frontier and Bulgaria is preparing for war.

The Congo Independent State upholds King Leopold's rule and denies that cruelties have been practiced.

Jean Dunsmyre, Canada's richest woman, is dead. Her son was one time lieutenant-governor of the province.

Government inspectors are investigating the wreck of the Star of Bengal. The ship's officers will testify that the vessel could have been saved together with the 111 lives had the tugs not abandoned her.

Utah Democrats have selected J. William Knight as their candidate for governor. His father was first offered the nomination.

The American fleet has arrived at Manila and was received amid great rejoicing.

English trainmen threaten to strike for better pay and fully 500,000 would go out. Wages range from \$5 per week for signalmen to \$16 for the best engineers. Conductors get \$8 per week.

France will back Russia in a move to make Bulgaria give Turkey a disputed line of railroad.

Richard Croker, ex-Tammany leader, will visit New York.

Roosevelt has declined an invitation to visit Australia.

A freight train collided with an excursion near Toledo, O., and six persons were killed and a number injured.

MAY MEAN WAR.

Clouds Looming Dark Over Balkan States Once More.

London, Oct. 6.—Events which threaten to change the political face of Europe are crystallizing with lightning like rapidity. Almost over night the horizon of the near east, which seemed gradually assuming a peaceful appearance, has become crowded with war clouds.

News has reached here from several sources that two definite strokes are impending which cannot fail to bring matters to a crisis, and perhaps force an immediate war.

One is the proclamation of Prince Ferdinand, of the Independence of Bulgaria, which will include Roumelia, taking for himself the title of czar.

The other is an announcement by Austria-Hungary of the practical annexation of the provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina as appanages of the Austro-Hungarian crown.

Either action will be equivalent to the tearing up of the treaty of Berlin, while Prince Ferdinand's course seems almost certain to precipitate a war between Bulgaria and Turkey.

Before these possibilities the quarrel of the East Roumelian section of the Orient railway sinks into insignificance. Both armies are reported to be quietly and swiftly mobilizing on the borders. Bulgaria is said to be buying up munitions and horses on an extensive scale.

The Bulgarians have faith in their army, which has reached a high state of efficiency, although it is perhaps lacking in officers, and the war for which Bulgaria has long been suspected of preparing could be fought with more advantage to her now than when the Turkish government has had time to reorganize its forces, enervated by corruption and neglect of the old regime.

AUTOS OFF STREETS.

Chicago Policemen Enforce a Long-Forgotten Ordinance.

Chicago, Oct. 6.—Nearly 1000 of our very best citizens and several tourists from adjoining cities were today jostled off the South Side boulevard by sundry large, thick policemen and forced to do their speeding over the ordinary streets.

This was due to the discovery by the South Park commissioners of a forged ordinance which forbids any vehicle on the boulevards which emits smoke or any "stinking odor." Consequently many haughty persons whose touring cars were filling the atmosphere with the reek of petrol were side-tracked by the police and invited to betake their "offensive odors" elsewhere.

At that hundreds of cars escaped for the reason that they were traveling so fast the odor did not assail the watchmen until the machines were beyond reach. The game was comparatively easy while the sun was shining, for the faint ripple of smoke could then be detected, but the officers abandoned their efforts when darkness fell. Of the thousands of persons ordered off the boulevards, none disobeyed, so the city gains no revenue.

200,000 ARE AFTER LAND.

Last of Uncle Sam's Distributions in Rosebud Reservation.

Dallas, S. D., Oct. 6.—Two hundred thousand persons will take advantage of the opening of \$20,000 acres of free government land in South Dakota, to-morrow. The parceling of this vast tract of farm country in the Rosebud Indian reservation is the last of Uncle Sam's big land distributions. Every one is to have a chance at a 160-acre farm. Last spring it was now selling at \$20 to \$30 an acre. It is estimated that this drawing will surpass all other government openings in the number who will take part, at least 200,000 people being expected to register. The number of 160-acre farms is 5000. This means that only one person out of every 40 can possibly get a farm.

Already crowds have arrived at the border, and have set up tents prepared to make a comfortable stay until after the drawing. The registration points are at Dallas and Gregory, S. D., on the east border of the reservation; Chamberlain and Presho, S. D., on the north, and O'Neill and Valentine, Neb., on the south.

Eight Perish in Flames.

New York, Oct. 6.—Eight persons are believed to have been burned to death and several were injured, one fatally, in a fire in a crowded tenement house on Mulberry street, between I and 2 1/2 clock this morning. Several tenants jumped from windows and fire escapes when the flames cut off their retreat. The fire started on the first floor in a dry goods store, and spread rapidly. There is a fire escape on the front of the building, but it was of little use, as the persons in the building completely lost their heads, and children were thrown from the windows to the street.

Greater Than Thought.

Bombay, Oct. 5.—Upwards of 7000 bodies already have been exhumed by the health department of Hyderabad, and the belief prevails that the total death toll resulting from the floods that devastated the Hyderabad and Deccan districts a week ago will exceed all previous estimates.

Russia Has Disease in Hand.

St. Petersburg, Oct. 6.—The cholera epidemic is being kept well in hand, considering the hold it had on the city before proper measures to prevent its spread were taken. In the 24 hours from noon Saturday until noon today, the new cases numbered 136 and deaths 62.

CZAR OF BULGARIANS

Prince Ferdinand Issues Proclamation of Independence.

WANTS NO MORE TURKISH RULE

Austria-Hungary Also Steps in and Will Annex Two Provinces of the Sultan.

Constantinople, Oct. 6.—Bulgaria has declared her independence of Turkey and is marching her troops to the frontier in preparation for war. Turkish troops are also advancing.

Austria-Hungary has given notice to the powers that she intends to annex permanently to her dominions the Turkish provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which she has occupied and governed under mandate of the great powers for 30 years.

The proclamation of Bulgarian independence was made by Prince Ferdinand in the presence of his cabinet at Tirnova, the capital of the ancient kingdom of Bulgaria. The cabinet met the prince at the frontier yesterday and journeyed with him to Tirnova.

The dispute with Bulgaria began in regard to the control of the Orient railroad. Diplomatic correspondence among the powers betrayed a serious lack of harmony and encouraged Bulgaria to take the bold step of today. Turkey is convinced that Austria, backed by Germany, encouraged Bulgaria to declare her independence in order to strike a blow at the Kiamil ministry and compromise the new constitution.

Varna and other Bulgarian towns are pleased today with declarations that the moment has now arrived to proclaim independence, as otherwise Turkey, on the strength of the treaty of Berlin, will demand the restitution of Eastern Rumelia.

GERMANY TO BACK AUSTRIA.

Favors Annexation Scheme—Advises Turkey Against War.

Berlin, Oct. 6.—The foreign office today declared that Germany would support Austria-Hungary in the event of the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Associated Press is authorized to state that Germany associates herself with the mediation proposals submitted by Great Britain to the Turkish and Bulgarian governments.

It is recognized officially that Bulgaria's proclamation gravely complicates the situation, and until the attitude of the sultan is known the German government is unable to foresee its course of action, except that in no event will Germany bring pressure to bear at Constantinople to influence the decision of the porte.

Should the Turkish government seek the advice of the powers regarding the advisability of asserting her supremacy over Bulgaria by military force, Germany will not be able to advise the porte to go to war. The Turkish army is not prepared, but the Bulgarian army is ready.

Servians Clamor for War.

Belgrade, Serbia, Oct. 6.—The news of Austria-Hungary's action with regard to the annexation of the provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina has aroused Servia to the danger point. The streets here are crowded with a wild mob, many of the rioters discharging their revolvers and demanding war with Austria, rather than take annexation.

TRAIN WAITS FOR CREAM

First Eastbound on New St. Paul Line Starts Late.

Butte, Mont., Oct. 6.—The first regular passenger train from Butte to Chicago over the Pacific Coast extension of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul railway left this city yesterday several minutes late because of a tardy milkman who failed to get around early enough to supply the combination car with cream.

This car is one of the features of the St. Paul trains, and it was not intended that on the first trip out of Butte the larler should go wanting. The train waited for the milk vendor.

Enormous Wheat Movement.

Winnipeg, Man., Oct. 6.—The Canadian Pacific last week moved an average of fifty trains of grain daily to Thunder bay, according to a statement given out by the officials of the company today. Never in the history of the railroad has there been such a quantity of grain transported before the close of navigation. Some blockades have been reported, but on the whole the movement of water has been enormous. The farm implement houses from the United States have done an enormous business in Western Canada this year.

693 Miles Under Water.

Cherbourg, Oct. 6.—The submarine Emeraude arrived here today, after a run of 81 hours, in which she covered a distance of 693 miles under water. The vessel maintained a regular speed of nine knots an hour. The crew, although much fatigued, bore the severe trial admirably.