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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 glided track to the moon, the lowliest of earth's distances, and the sky afterward! We can't leave this great thing undone. Listen, dearest; when the dawn comes up the Madams 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 motherbird 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 stake-hole. At haven't been able to get rid of him since. He's my steward at sea, my butler ashore, and 'You're sold' anywhere. Denny, I'm going ashore at dawn—"

"'Tis cool '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—was it I put on me glasses?" Constable asked.

"'Is at th' little wank, you mane?'"

"'Yes, the natives.'"

"'If I only had some goats, sorr!'"

"'Why goats?'"

"'Sure, I've been potherin' with lime rather an' sea water an' wather straight an' sugar an' milk—whin goats could do 't' 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 pulled anchor.

The launch was in readiness before. 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 bargues, 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 pained 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, she 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 warning nor wearing—she was 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, like 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 limitless 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 dazling 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 earth stretched to a cracking tension. The air was beeting with strange convulsions. 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 curling of the old wall with his burden, crawling over, and grasped the rusty chain. Luscious caressed tongues lapped the clitter's roused 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 unwholesome 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 red and gold on the far, dim hills. Her eyes smarted from weariness, but her mind, like an automatic thing, swept around the great estate 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 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 deep into the shroud, and was lost alike

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 banged a tattoo against the steel-bound 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 zest to the white smog from the volcano. Lara felt Macready pulling at her arm.

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

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

"Ye can do no good here, sure. Don't make 't' cool far us?"

"Make haste below, miss—quall 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.

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The asylum superintendent says it is dangerous to move Thaw, as his condition has not improved.

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The Seattle health authorities have urged the people to secure rat killing cats to fight any possibility of the plague.

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Four persons were cremated by forest fires near Hurst, Mich.

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Strikes in the paper mills of the East may cause a paper famine at election.

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Sixty people were rescued at La Roque, Mich., after spending a night in burning forests.

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 of Note Outside the State.

A snow storm in Colorado has caused six deaths.

A tornado in New Mexico was the cause of four deaths.

Gamblers are making a desperate fight for life at Reno.

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Smoke is so dense on the Great Lakes from forest fires that navigation is almost impossible.

Forest fires have again broken out in Chippewa county, Michigan, and are threatening in the extreme.

THE COMING ELECTION.

Dozens of States to Vote Upon New Laws and Amendments.

Chicago, Oct. 20.—Elections will be held in the various states and in the territories of Arizona and New Mexico November 3. Three states, Oregon, Maine and Vermont, have held their state elections, and have named members of the next congress—the sixty-first Arkansas and Georgia have named state officers only and will select congressmen at the coming election. In 28 states governors or other state officers are to be elected; a number of these states will also elect members of the legislature. Six states will choose justices of the supreme court or minor state officers. In seven, congressmen only are to be elected, and in two, congressmen and a legislature only.

The terms of 31 United States senators, 18 Republicans and 13 Democrats, expire March 3, 1909. Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana and Maryland have chosen Democrats, and Kentucky a Republican, while Vermont has chosen a legislature which will name two Republicans. The present senate is composed of 61 Republicans and 31 Democrats.

Members of the national house of representatives are to be elected. Oregon and Maine have already chosen Republican representatives. In some of the southern states Democrats only have been nominated, while in others Prohibition, Socialist and Independence party nominees will oppose Republicans and Democrats. The present house is composed of 391 members, 223 Republicans and 166 Democrats. There are two vacancies.

South Carolina, as usual, has only one ticket—the Democratic for state officers. Louisiana also has but one ticket—the Democratic. In this state, however, a justice of the supreme court and a railroad commissioner are the only state officers to be elected.

The Prohibition party has tickets in 31 states, the Socialists in 27, the Independence party in 12, the Socialist Labor in 6 and the People's or Populist party in 5, including Nebraska, where they have fused with the Democrats.

The number of tickets in the different states is: 1, South Carolina and Louisiana; 2, Alabama and North Carolina; 3, Delaware, Florida, Montana, New Hampshire, Oklahoma and North Dakota; 4, Colorado, Nevada, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, West Virginia and Wisconsin; 5, Connecticut, Idaho, Illinois, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri and Nebraska; 6, Indiana, Iowa, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York and Texas; 7, Ohio.

The Prohibitionists have tickets in Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Washington, West Virginia and Wisconsin; 6, Alabama, Colorado, Florida, Ohio; 7, Ohio.

The Socialists have tickets in Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Washington, West Virginia and Wisconsin; 6, Alabama, Colorado, Florida, Ohio; 7, Ohio.

The Independence party has tickets in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New York, Ohio and Texas.

The People's or Populist party has tickets in Indiana, Iowa, Missouri, Nebraska and Ohio.

The Socialist Labor in Connecticut, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, Ohio and Texas.

In 23 states a total of 90 proposed constitutional amendments, laws, questions or propositions will be voted upon. This does not include Michigan, where a revision of the present constitution will be submitted to the voters for adoption or rejection. The number of amendments or questions in the different states is: 1, Iowa, Texas, Wyoming; 2, Idaho, Illinois, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, Rhode Island, Washington, West Virginia; 3, Alabama, Colorado, Florida, Ohio; 4, Minnesota, Wisconsin; 5, North Dakota, Oregon; 6, South Dakota; 7, Missouri; 8, Louisiana; 9, California.

The amendments or proposed laws of several states are of general interest. In South Dakota, the question of repealing the "one-year-residence" act, which was passed by the last legislature in order to stop rapid divorces, will be submitted to the voters. Formerly suit for divorce could be brought after a six months' residence in the state. Opposition to this short term of residence resulted, and the one-year act was passed. The latter has been objected to in certain quarters and petitions finally were secured for the submission of the one-year act to a vote of the people at the coming election.

In Illinois the question of a Lakes-to-the-Gulf deep waterway will be before the people in the form of a constitutional amendment authorizing the state to issue bonds of \$20,000,000 for the enterprise.

California is one of the latest of the states to agitate election reform. To the people there will be submitted a proposed constitutional amendment, among others, empowering the legislature to enact a direct primary law providing for the direct nomination of all candidates for public office.

Three Shocks in Manila. Manila, Oct. 20.—Two sharp earthquake shocks were felt here today, followed by a third, which was less severe. No damage was done in or about Manila, and as yet no report has been received from other points on the island. The first shock came at 10:50 A. M., the second at 1:40, and the third at 3:10 P. M.

DEATH LIST GROWS

41 Known Fatalities in Michigan Forest Fires.

AT LEAST 1,700 ARE HOMELESS

Fats of 60 Families Camped on Lake Shore Remains in Doubt—Worst is Over.

Alpena, Mich., Oct. 20.—The certified known death list resulting from the forest fires in Presque Isle and Alpena counties stands at 41, with several persons still reported missing and a probability of severe loss of life in northern Pulaski and Krakow townships in Presque Isle county.

At least 60 families were living near the shore of Lake Huron in the northern half of Pulaski and Krakow townships and nothing has been heard of them since the fire.

At Grand Lake a farmer and wife and four children are known to have taken refuge in a boat and nothing has since been heard from them.

A dozen school children sent home by the teachers have not been heard from.

While big fires are still burning throughout the northern tier of counties, not a single village or town is now known to be in danger, and only the Hurst branch of the Detroit & Mackinac railroad is out of commission.

Some apprehension is felt for Grace Harbor, which is located on the shore of Lake Huron, northeast of here. No word has been received from there since the fire.

At the lowest estimate there are 1700 people homeless, and there is not even an adequate supply of water.

The Detroit & Mackinac Railroad company ordered 150 pumps sent into the fire district. The relief fund at Alpena has reached \$3000, and is growing rapidly.

MYSTERY ABOUT MAINE.

Warship Arrives Unannounced and Authorities Keep Quiet.

Portsmouth, N. H., Oct. 20.—The battleship Maine, one of the special service squadrons that has preceded the Atlantic battleship fleet on its voyage around the world, arrived in the lower bay yesterday.

The Maine has been in wireless communication with the commandant of the yard here since Monday morning. The messages have caused considerable stir among the officials of the yard, who refuse to reveal their significance. For the first time this year, wireless operators have been forbidden to disclose the contents of the messages.

It is understood that the Maine will stay in port here for three weeks, and after a cruise will later return for a general refitting. During the present stay the vessel will go to the Kittery drydock to have her hull scraped.

The Maine and the Alabama sailed from Hampton Roads as units of the battleship fleet. They were detached from the fleet at San Francisco and sent ahead to prepare the way.

The Maine's last port was the Azores. The Alabama is expected to reach New York tomorrow. She left the Maine last Wednesday.

THOUSANDS ARE STARVING.

Floods Devastate Vast Area in China at Harvest Time.

Victoria, B. C., Oct. 20.—Local Chinese have received cablegrams telling of heavy loss of life and great desolation of Yunnan and Heiping, China, as a result of the breaking of the dykes and overflow of the West river, inundating the district for a hundred miles. The number of killed is not given, but the message states that the loss has been immense and starvation is feared, and it appeals to the Chinese abroad to send aid.

Subscriptions from local Chinese were made within a short time after the receipt of the cablegrams, which totaled \$7000, this amount being cabled to Chinese officials at Canton for distribution among the sufferers. Starvation is expected to follow, as the disaster comes at the time of harvest, when the crops are ready to be taken from the fields. Half the district is stated to be flooded.

Forest Fires in New England.

North Adams, Mass., Oct. 20.—The Berkshire mountain region in western Massachusetts and the foothills of the Free mountain range in southern Vermont were covered with a thick smoke pall last night from fires which have burned over thousands of acres of timber land. Some of the fires are assuming dangerous proportions. The most serious forest fire last night was reported east of Bennington, Vt., where hundreds of square miles of practically unbroken woodland seemed threatened by the blaze.

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There is much activity on board English war vessels, as the result of the Balkan trouble.