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The White Sepulchre

The Tale of Pelee

BY WILL LEVINGTON COMFORT

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CHAPTER XI.

When Constable opened his eyes he was far down the slope, and Breen was bending over him.

"Hello!" said he. "What unforseeable? I had just settled down comfortably to view that spot when—pluff! I began to lose track of things and my head broke. What was it—gas, altitude—?"

"More likely old Pelee was up to some thing he preferred you shouldn't see," said Breen. "I know the racket turned me sick as a poisoned rat while I was dragging at your leg. I know that the natives wouldn't venture within two hundred yards; also, that you are a mortal heavy young person."

"And so you retrieved the fallen under the guns of the enemy? That was good of you, Breen. It was, indeed."

The natives were pressing in. Darkness was beginning. Breen was conscious of a catch in his throat.

"Peter," said Breen quietly, "I ran from you this morning."

"You didn't run from me this afternoon, which is lucky for me. Take a little touch yourself, old playmate, and don't get moody. One needs a pal when one makes such a mussy dumping-ground of good chances. The engaging Mr. Stemberge never did me any harm, and all that the newspapers could accomplish in the minds of people at large would move me to no deeper emotion than to say, 'Dear folks be—hanged!'"

"Peter, if I hadn't been here, you would be a good daylight run out on the decent ocean by this time, with the lady!"

"Please don't goad yourself further, Breen. That matter is mine—all mine." Constable spoke in a low voice. Breen was bending over him in the dusk. "You didn't force yourself upon me. You didn't even come along by chance. I asked you to cruise with me. You volunteered to tell me about yourself. I said it wasn't necessary. This man has a mind, and he isn't a coward, was the conclusion I came to that night, and I haven't seen fit to change my opinion."

"But the lady—"

"Yes, the lady has spoken. I am done—down and out. . . . The point is, you didn't turn on Pelee's throat. You're not to blame because I'm a dub of a lover. I'm not on sick report. Breen was helping the other into the saddle."

"Not quite enough to abduct one frightened little mother-handled girl," Constable replied.

"They were riding together down the winding trail, apart from the guides. The lights of Ajoupa Houillon were ahead, and the mountain carried on a frightful drumming behind. The cooling masses of volcanic sponge, miles above the craters, generated its own fire, and, lit in the flashes, looked like billows of boiling steel. Constable was very weak, and Breen rode upon sheer nerve—nerves that men had often wondered at."

"Peter," he said at length, "you are not through trying to get the lady out of this?"

"To think that such a tone and such a question could come from the 'implacable Stemberge'!" Constable said, with a laugh.

"The 'implacable Stemberge' was never crucified before," Breen answered. "To you and me, together, it does not vastly matter that I am Stemberge, one of the bigger wolves. But others have come in. Because I am here, you stand dazed to-night, your heart torn out. Because I am here, you went up to the mouth of that horrible pit to-day, and lay down to die. I have played with men and women, Peter, but I never wrecked a white man before, or broke the heart of a friend."

A hand stretched across the dark and fell upon Breen's arm and tightened there. "I know how you feel; but what would you have me do?" Constable muttered.

"When I see a wisp of smoke on the horizon, and know that you and the lady and the Madame are wrapped in it—"

"For four days I have been dreaming that dream, Breen."

"It must come true this night. There will have been a reaction. Go there to-night. Speak to her alone. Tell her how you came to know me—how men look at these things—that the newspaper story was as new to you as to herself. Tell her of your trip to Pelee, and how the disorder they see and hear down in the city looks up there at first hand!"

It was at this instant that a full-rigged thought sprang into Breen's brain, which had known but the passing of hopeless derelicts throughout the day. He dared not trust the thought to words, lest the other should cancel it, but he called to the guides to increase the pace.

"Ah, she would not listen to words of mine," Constable answered hopelessly. "If she had any faith in me, words would not be necessary. A man knows when he is beaten. I have drawn my little quiver for one day. To-morrow—"

"There may not be any to-morrow for Saint Pierre."

"Of course. For that matter, we might be boiled out like a pair of tater-bugs before we can pick up a snack in Ajoupa Houillon. Then, again, the people may be right, and I a frenzied alarmist. Pelee is throwing off pressure true and steady as a clock running down. It may be that he'll relieve his crowded chambers this way."

Such words, more than anything that had passed, revealed the extent of Con-

stable's reaction. They were entering Ajoupa Houillon, where food and fresh mounts were procurable.

"It's probably better for her that she did not give herself to me," Constable observed, when they were in the saddle again. His mind was deepening the bitter groove now. "We'll put all this behind us presently, Breen. We're mates, I guess."

"This is our last ride together, Peter. There are many reasons. One is—the law is on my trail! . . . Will you please inform me what you are laughing at?"

Constable carefully related the Cruise episode.

Breen groaned. "Don't you see, Peter, you are winding yourself up tighter and tighter in my crimes?"

"Somehow, I can't get wrought up over trifles to-night. The detective matter disposed of, what are the other reasons why you and I must diverge after this night?"

Breen was silent a moment. "I was pretty hard-hit this morning," he said finally. "The rough weather broke down my idea about not going to the shop again. It seems incredible, but Soronia has never had a lover—before. I found her—if you'll forgive me—in need of me. You see, I had just come from the reeking stone of sacrifice where you lay; and I felt a pair of crooks eyes—promised to go to see no more."

"Suppose I had missed Cruise?" Constable asked bitterly. "Suppose I had been a poor liar?"

"There are many Cruises, Peter. They won't all fall. You can't keep this one off always. It amounts to just this for me—that I have found my little life in the midst of the sea, like that other promoter who all but conquered Europe."

"But why could you not both go aboard with me?" the other persisted.

"I have told you that after this ride I cease to vampirize the career of Constable. If Cruise finds the Rue de Rivoli, very well. If not, for the present, very well again. None of his ilk shall find you and me together. Two or three times, back across the forbidden tundras of years, I have met men who stack up something as you do in my thoughts to-night. I never hurt any of those fellows as I have hurt you. I'm too fond of you to hurt you any harder. Let's talk about something else."

Constable had received a singular appeal. He knew that if there were any future for him, he would think of Breen's last words co-ordinate in memory with the quaking rim of the crater. It did not occur to him to answer at once. They were passing through Morne Rouge, so overcrowded now that people were sleeping in the streets. On the dark down-trail again, words did not come to him, and when the party re-entered the bank of falling ash and the sulphur stench, it was not good to open one's mouth in speech.

The guides were paid at the edge of the city. Saint Pierre was dark and harrowingly still. The hoof-beats of the two mules which the Americans retained were muffled in the ash, as if they were pounding along the sandy beach. Often the rousing ferret of death reached the nostrils of the riders, above the drying, nostrilling vapor of the volcano, and their beasts shied and snorted at the unward lumps on the highway. It was as if war and penitence had stalked through Saint Pierre that day, and a winter storm had tried to cover the dreadful aftermath. A door opened at last before them. A door was a cry from Soronia. Peter Rabaut hurried out and led the mules to shelter.

Constable sank into his old seat at the round table under the window. He watched Breen and the woman. His friend was huge and lean in the lamp light; his white clothing stained from the saddle, his hair and mustache white from ash, his black eyes burning in a face bugged out of ghastliness. The woman was in his arms as they stood together. What they said, Constable did not allow his mind to reason with, but the glory of her lover's presence which shone in the eyes of Soronia called down upon the water her own black vistas of desolation. She had found, for an hour, the true and the beautiful—the soul anchorage which he was never to know! . . . He would keep all craft of the Cruise stamp from blundering into her sweet haven—this he could do, was his thought. Food was placed before him, and he ate a little, for the sake of Breen. His eyes pained from the lamplight, and he dropped his face forward into his arms on the table. Close to the wood, the vibrations of the mountain boomed louder in his ears.

"But you must not go away again!" Soronia implored.

"Yes, for an hour—two hours at the most—little fairy," Breen whispered.

They were in the living room across the court, where the bird cages were tiered and covered with cloths. She clung to him pitifully.

"With you away—oh, my lover, no, no! . . . I cannot live again for hours and hours!"

"Hush!—he is in great trouble. He must not awake until after I am gone. Then he must not know where I have gone. I am going to the plantation house on the Morne d'Orange. It is for him. Two hours at the most, and the last—the last I shall ever leave you, little fairy."

Breen recrossed the court and entered the fruit shop on tiptoe. Constable did not move; his breathing was inaudible. At the street door Soronia joined him like a shadow. He kissed her and put her arms from him. It was eleven-fifteen by the old French clock.

Soronia, alone, stared for an instant at the figure sprawled across the table—the man who had caused her lover twice to be torn from her arms that day. Then she moved to a chair, in the shadow at the far end of the shop, and sat down rigidly to wait.

CHAPTER XII.

In the dim upper hallway, Lara read in the face of her mother, hard and white as ivory, that the clash of wills had come. A slender arm barred the door through which the daughter had to pass.

"Lara, what do you mean to do?"

"I mean to hear what this man has to say."

"At midnight—listen to an outlaw?"

"Yes, let me pass!"

The elder woman did not move her arm. Slowly, softly, she said: "I say that you shall not! Order Uncle Joey to send the thief away, or you and I—are estranged!"

Lara faltered before the revulging possibilities of the moment. "Mother," she implored, "don't poison the years! I am a grown woman—I see my way clearly!"

She leaned against the arm that crossed the doorway. It did not give. The face close to hers in the feeble light burned away her self-control. The rigidity of the bar softened—as if it had pressed against her throat. Every fiber of her young body sprang tense to burst the inaudible bond. Not a tissue relaxed, although the bar was forced. Her mother's fingers scraped like wood across the casing. The sickening sound made an imperishable record in the girl's brain. Horrified at the thing she had done, Lara would have fallen at her mother's feet, praying forgiveness, had there reached her now a murmur of pain or relenting.

But the face was not changed. The sovereign will would not have broken had she seen her way into the room with a sword. Low spoken, freezing utterances found the brain of the girl, prompting of the dread, imperfect faculty.

"Go, grown woman, who sees her way clearly! Go with the thief to your lover—who dares not come to you! Go out to the hunted ship, then—with the thief and his dull tool!"

Lara seized her hat and shawl and darted past the pitiless voice, shouting her ears with her hands. Down the stairway she sped, her one thought to flee. There was trace below; the awfulness of defeat behind. . . . The men had heard nothing. Breen stood by the door, his face whitened with dust. The planter waited near the foot of the stairs—another obstacle.

"Go to mother quickly—she needs you!"

"Where are you going, Lara?" the old man gasped.

"To the ship with the other refugees!"

"Not with this man, child—"

"He is Mr. Constable's friend."

"But I'll go with you, dear! I'll have a carriage brought—"

"In the name of pity, Uncle Joey—don't leave mother alone longer—up there!" she said desperately. "I am going out to the ship. Your nephew has asked me to be—his wife. This man will take me to him. Go to mother!"

The planter turned a last look at Breen and obeyed, his face a field of conflict. Lara threw the shawl about her shoulders and hurried to the door, which Breen opened in utmost amazement. She turned to him in the dark, with the burning question:

"Is Peter Constable dead?"

"Is he hurt—lying on the ship?"

"No, he is reasonably well, and in Saint Pierre."

Reacting weakness rushed over her now, the doubts of an untried soul, and the loneliness of an outcast. The scene in the upper hallway was appeared in her brain. She had been loomed throughout the day, unerringly by the processes of mind toward the expression of her own will; but the fruition was so sudden and horrible as forever to be beyond the amount and circumstance of extenuation.

If Constable were well and in Saint Pierre, why did he not come to her, instead of sending this man? Even though Breen were all a man could be, had Constable the right to send him to her, after the allegations of the press? Could there be any truth in the suggestions of her mother? Might there not exist in the Constable character a war of the base and noble?

These big tangible terrors possessed her. She could not go back—the bridges were burned. The man at her side did not speak, save to answer her questions. Ahead were possibilities and fancies, beside which the rumbling menaces of the mountain were clean fears. She halted. Her body averted a little, and the man put out his hand to steady her. A cry escaped her lips.

"I cannot go on!" she exclaimed brokenly. "I have done a terrible wrong in coming. Everything is different. Leave me. I—I shall go back toward Fort de France!"

(To be continued.)

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

Two men held up a Portland street car crew and secured \$12.

Austria is strengthening her frontier to guard against Serbia.

Japan seeks a new agreement with the United States about China.

Pope Pius has just celebrated the 10th anniversary of his ordination as a priest.

A ring from the Duke d'Abuzzi for Miss Elkins has been seized for duty. It is valued at \$5,000.

Secretary Wright has appeared before the house committee in favor of free sugar from the Philippines.

Objection to the admission of Irish-American delegates has caused a storm in the British parliament.

A lone highway man held up 20 men at a hotel in Hazen, Nev., and secured \$50 in cash, refusing \$200 worth of jewelry.

Peter van Vlissingen, a rich Chicago real estate man, has confessed great frauds, and on his own request has been sent to the penitentiary without trial. He stole more than \$100,000.

The Chinese dowager empress is mortally ill.

Roosevelt denounces Haas' crime and applauds Heney.

A race between balloons from the Pacific to the Atlantic is about to be attempted.

It is estimated that General Gomez has been elected president of Cuba by a majority of 25,000.

The death of the Chinese emperor has been confirmed. The regent appointed a friend of reform.

Prince de Sagan and his American wife have already fired each other, and may secure a divorce.

Ruef's trial will be continued by volunteer lawyers. Some of the best of San Francisco have offered their services.

Mrs. Conger, widow of the late ambassador to China, says there is not likely to be any uprising following the death of the emperor.

A wealthy Montana man, who has just died, provided in his will that if any women present themselves claiming to be his wife, each shall be given \$1.

Texas has declared a quarantine against smallpox, yellow fever, cholera, typhoid fever, bubonic plague or other communicable diseases. "Other communicable diseases" is understood to mean tuberculosis.

Denver has almost zero weather.

The anti-gambling war is again on in Reno.

Von Buelow is to present an ultimatum to the kaiser.

Roosevelt says there will be no slaughter of game on his trip to Africa.

Samuel Gompers will be re-elected president of the American Federation of Labor.

A New York delivery company contemplates tubes for the delivery of packages.

German miners blame managers for the recent disaster in which 390 men lost their lives.

The United States Steel corporation will spend \$5,500,000 in increasing the capacity of its plants.

For the first time in the history of the San Francisco mint, pennies and nickels are to be coined there.

The emperor of China is reported dead; the empress dowager dying, and regent appointed to control the destinies of the Flowery Kingdom.

District Attorney Langdon declares Heney is a martyr to the public, and says prosecutions will continue despite the attempted assassination.

The election of Gomez in Cuba is almost certain. The election is the first step toward again turning the island republic over to the people.

San Francisco has voted for municipal waterworks.

Liberals are expected to win in the Cuban elections.

Castro has finished his preparations for war with Holland.

Six Chinese were drowned in Niagara falls while trying to smuggle into the United States.

A German military balloon hit a tree and fell into the Baltic sea. The occupants were rescued.

The fate of Chancellor von Bismarck depends on the kaiser's acceptance of pledge to keep quiet.

Charles M. Schwab, the steel man, says real pleasure is not to be found in palaces, but among hammers and whistles.

EVENTS OF THE DAY

News Items Gathered from All Parts of the World.

PREPARED FOR THE BUSY READER

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Electoral Vote for President

State	Taft	Bryan
Alabama	10	11
Arkansas	10	11
California	10	11
Colorado	10	11
Connecticut	7	8
Delaware	3	3
Florida	10	11
Georgia	10	11
Idaho	3	3
Illinois	27	28
Indiana	15	16
Iowa	15	16
Kansas	10	11
Kentucky	10	11
Louisiana	10	11
Maine	6	7
Maryland	10	11
Massachusetts	16	17
Michigan	16	17
Minnesota	11	12
Mississippi	10	11
Missouri	16	17
Montana	3	3
Nebraska	10	11
Nevada	3	3
New Hampshire	4	5
New Jersey	12	13
New York	35	36
North Carolina	10	11
North Dakota	3	3
Ohio	23	24
Oklahoma	4	5
Oregon	4	5
Pennsylvania	34	35
Rhode Island	4	5
South Carolina	8	9
South Dakota	4	5
Tennessee	10	11
Texas	10	11
Vermont	4	5
Virginia	10	11
Washington	5	6
West Virginia	5	6
Wisconsin	10	11
Wyoming	3	3
Total	321	342

Membership of New House

State	Dem.	Rep.
Alabama	7	8
Arkansas	7	8
California	3	4
Colorado	3	4
Connecticut	3	4
Delaware	1	2
Florida	3	4
Georgia	3	4
Idaho	1	2
Illinois	6	7
Indiana	4	5
Iowa	4	5
Kansas	3	4
Kentucky	3	4
Louisiana	3	4
Maine	2	3
Maryland	3	4
Massachusetts	3	4
Michigan	3	4
Minnesota	3	4
Mississippi	3	4
Missouri	3	4
Montana	1	2
Nebraska	3	4
Nevada	1	2
New Hampshire	2	3
New Jersey	2	3
New York	11	12
North Carolina	7	8
North Dakota	1	2
Ohio	9	10
Oklahoma	2	3
Oregon	2	3
Pennsylvania	5	6
Rhode Island	1	2
South Carolina	3	4
South Dakota	2	3
Tennessee	3	4
Texas	10	11
Vermont	1	2
Virginia	3	4
Washington	2	3
West Virginia	2	3
Wisconsin	3	4
Wyoming	1	2
Total	178	216

New Governors of States

State	Name	Politics
Colorado	John F. Shafroth	D
Connecticut	George F. Liley	R
Delaware	Simon S. Pennewill	R
Florida	Albert W. Gilchrist	D
Idaho	James H. Brady	R
Illinois	Charles R. Deneen	R
Indiana	Thomas R. Marshall	R
Iowa	R. F. Carroll	R
Kansas	Thomas H. Geary	R
Massachusetts	Eben S. Draper	R
Michigan	Fred M. Warren	R
Minnesota	John A. Johnson	D
Missouri	Herbert S. Hallberg	R
Montana	Edward Dunlap	R
Nebraska	A. C. Sibley	R
New Hampshire	Henry E. Quality	R
New Jersey	Edward E. Hughes	R
North Carolina	W. W. Kitchin	D
North Dakota	William W. Bryan	D
Ohio	William D. Hoar	R
Rhode Island	Louis E. Herington	R
South Carolina	James B. McNeill	R
Tennessee	M. R. Patterson	D
Texas	Thomas M. Campbell	D
Vermont	William Stryker	R
Washington	S. G. Cogswell	R
West Virginia	W. E. Glass	R
Wisconsin	James O. Davidson	R

DIES BEFORE TELLING MUCH.

Assassin Haas is Believed to Have Given Little Information.

San Francisco, Nov. 17.—From the best information obtainable it is believed that Detective Burns secured some sort of a rambling statement from Haas to the effect that he had been approached by persons who attempted to increase his resentment toward Heney by making remarks such as "I would not stand such treatment," etc.

It is also rumored that Detective Burns is shortly to make public the statements which Haas made to him during the day of sweating to which Haas was subjected just before he took his own life. Just what these disclosures will be and whether or not they will implicate anybody in a conspiracy cannot now be learned from the prosecution.

It is true, however, that Detective Burns at the time he was making an examination of the body of the dead man at the county jail, was heard to make remarks which indicated that his chain of evidence secured from Haas statements was not nearly as conclusive as he had hoped, and that for that reason he deplored the act which made it impossible to secure any further statements.

After Oil King.

New York, Nov. 16.—John D. Rockefeller will be subpoenaed to appear as a witness in the United States court here in the federal suit to dissolve the Standard Oil company of New Jersey. United States Marshal Henkle was given a subpoena today and ordered to serve it on the oil king. It is reported that Rockefeller will be a willing witness.

PANIC CLOSES BANKS

Thousands of Gendarmes Guard Streets of Peking.

PRINCE CHUN FEARS REFORMERS

Masses of China Just Awakening to Death of Emperor and Dowager Empress.

Peking, Nov. 17.—China is beginning to realize that the emperor and the dowager empress are dead. Prince Chun, regent of the empire, in fear of increasing excitement and revolutionary movements, has taken a firm grip on affairs and has adopted stringent measures that will result in the maintenance of peace for a time at least.

At noon 3000 gendarmes guarded the streets, and other military forces were held in readiness for any emergency. Every precaution was taken to prevent a recurrence of the revolutionary tactics of last April and May, which were marked by widespread incendiarism. The foreign legations are under guard, special detachments of Chinese troops keeping watch at the approaches. The statement was made at the legations that there was no fear that the Chinese government would be unable to afford ample protection, but those within the legations were more alert than usual and seemingly anxious to have set at rest the doubts arising from the swift movement of events in the last few days.

There were many occurrences yesterday to add to the sinister aspect of affairs. Rumors were current for a time that the new dowager, Yehonaia and Yuan Shi Kai, the grand councillor, and one of the most powerful men in the empire, had committed suicide. Though there was no truth in these reports, they went far toward disturbing the Chinese and foreigners alike.

Serious runs on banks occurred yesterday and today, and 14 native banks closed. The crowds were wild with excitement, and toward the close of the day the police intervened and drove them back. One foreign concern, the Yokohama Specie bank, suffered a big run on its Tientsin notes, but the British, Russian and German institutions were not affected. It is probable that a number of native banks will be closed tomorrow, and it is believed that the government will step in and endeavor to stop the financial panic among the poorer classes.

BULLET IS REMOVED.

Prosecutor Stands Operation Well and Relies Rapidly.

San Francisco, Nov. 17.—After passing through a most successful operation for the removal of the bullet which was fired at him by Morris Haas during the Ruef trial last Friday, the condition of Francis I. Heney is reported by the doctors to be favorable in every way, and predictions of his ultimate recovery are made by his physicians. The operation followed the taking of X-ray photographs which plainly showed the location of the leaden pellet in the muscles of the left lower maxillary. Chief Surgeon Terry, of the city hospital service, wielded the instruments, while Drs. Stillman, Moffat and Huntington assisted.

It was found that the bullet, which entered the right side of the head just in front of the ear, had passed downward, crossing the palate and striking the left lower jawbone, which was slightly splintered, but not broken. The bullet was deflected backward by striking the bone, and lodged in the muscles of the jaw. Its removal necessitated the utmost surgical skill, as it lay close to the big blood vessels of the neck.

Mr. Heney rallied rapidly from the effects of the anesthetic, showing no ill effects from the drug or shock from the operation. He passed a quiet day and slept peacefully last night. At midnight it was said by his attendants that his condition was entirely favorable, and that hopes for his speedy recovery were entertained.

Plan Big Meeting.

Portland, Nov. 17.—The next important convention to be held in Portland will be that of the Northwestern Fruitgrowers' association, which will meet with the Oregon State Horticultural society the first three days of December. Preparations are being made to house a large exhibit of fruit in the building during the week of the convention. British Columbia and the states of Idaho, Washington and Oregon will be represented in the convention, these being the state associations that comprise the Northwestern association.

Australian Chinese Hint Foul Play.

Melbourne, Nov. 17.—The Sydney correspondent of the Age says that the Chinese reform party in that city has received a cablegram to the effect that the death of the Chinese emperor was due to foul play, and that it is feared a rebellion will break out.