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## The Whited Sepulchre

The Tale of Pelee

BY WILL LEVINGTON COMFORT

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### CHAPTER XII.—(Continued.)

Breen was dazed by the altered mood of the woman. Until the present instant of their walk, he had been contemplating a serene end to a day of most brutal beginnings. They were on the eminence of the Morne d'Orange. Pelee was a beautiful changing jewel in the black north. Breen heard the woman's breathing. He had no pity for her. He had spoken with exceeding gentleness, but it was forced. In the same voice he continued, as she did not speak.

"You could not walk to Port de France, and there is neither boat nor carriage to-night. I thought you were going to let him be happy again."

"Did he send you to me?"

"He does not know that I am here, Miss Stansbury," Breen replied. "As we rode in from the mountain, I begged him to come to you to-night, but he said that if there were any hope of his saving your life, you would have shown him some sign this morning, instead—"

She felt herself called to her own defence. "Could he not see that the newspapers brought a shock to me?" she questioned pitifully.

"The shock was just as great, and the matter contained in the newspapers just as new to him," he said. "Do you suppose he would have introduced me to you if he had understood all about me? I am all to blame, not our good Peter. Because I brought all this trouble upon him, I came to-night to undo the tragedy of your being away from him, and yet so close to the volcano."

"And you went with him to the crater to-day?"

"Do you think I would let him kill himself?"

"Oh, no!—but you said you spoke about riding back with Peter from the crater," she returned hastily. The man's unyielding position wrought upon her strangely, sometimes startled, sometimes steadied, her.

"I heard that he had gone up the mountain, and followed. I found him at the summit in a faint, lying at the very rim of disaster."

"You saved him from death?"

"A very essential proceeding, since I sent him there."

"Oh, what do you mean?"

"It was my presence that prevented you both from being out at sea to-night."

"It was a very little thing that brought him back from the crater, Miss Stansbury, but a big accomplishment to make him glad that I brought him back."

"Did he intend to kill himself by going there? Do you mean that I—I—?"

Breen felt that she deserved vividly to appreciate her failures of performance.

"No, Miss Stansbury, but he was dazed with punishment. That a doubt could exist in your mind regarding his integrity, pulled him out of his orbit, so to speak."

"But it was all so intricate and mysterious," she pleaded. "I didn't mean to do wrong, but you must see that a woman who can only wait, and never be told things—may not know what is best?"

His heart kindled to her now, but he was not building for the moment. "Let me tell you about Peter Constable," he said gently. "I was hunted to a corner in New York. I am all that the papers say, and much besides which they have overlooked. Only, I have never robbed the poor, nor widows and orphans, and I never have betrayed a friend until to-day, when my history arose in his wrath and man-handled poor Peter. All my operations were over when he found me—all my faces and strategies. I had lost my wool-cap, and the lamb would no longer play with me. They drove me to the water front. I was at the edge of the end when Peter Constable called."

"Come, Miss Stansbury, let us walk on toward the launch."

Breen had judged well the instant to make this suggestion. Though afraid that she would turn back, he spoke briskly, lightly, as if she had merely passed to survey the night. She obeyed, and, as he talked on, their steps grew faster and faster down the morne toward the edge of the silent, stricken city. Breen related how his friend had put aside for her the century-rare opportunity of studying Pelee in the throes. Of the volcano itself, he spoke familiarly, trenchantly, as only one could do who had peered into the roaring sink of chaos that day. He pictured at last the man with whom he had ridden, their last ride together, the generous which men love, and—in hints—most ethereal—the brooding romance.

She was thrilled by this stranger who had played with men and lived to pray for one. By his own word, world-weary and a skeptic of human character, he had discovered his Utopia in a friend. Because she burned to believe all Breen said, his words rang true. Higher in her heart than he had reached in any of the day's fluctuations, Constable was upraised now and held. She did not call it love—she did not call it anything; but it was a valiant presence to cling to, as she entered with this stranger, hunted of men, the smothered lane which Rue Victor Hugo had become.

"You are a prince of defenders," she whispered.

"A man less white would not need a friend to champion his cause," he replied.

"Where is Peter Constable now?"

"I will put you in the care of Ernest in the launch, and then bring him to you," he said.

"Where is Mr. Constable?" she demanded imperiously.

"In a little shop up in the Rue de Rivoli."

She did not fall in this last pitiless assault, though the dreadful final sentence of her mother came back. This night was set apart in her life for the learning of the truth.

"I shall not wait at the launch. I shall go to him—there—up in the terrace. Why not?"

"It is the far better way," Breen answered steadily. "I only thought to save you from the climb."

The horrid insinuations could find no hold in her brain. They hovered afar off, like navies crippled in the roadstead. Breen's ready answer was a sterling defence.

"Let us hurry," she panted.

They turned and faced the empty cliff. To the left was an open door, and the form of a woman was carved in the light. The woman in the doorway spoke words warmed and vitalized from her very heart, and Breen answered and took her in his arms. Lara brushed past the two and into the shop.

The huge figure hunched forward upon the table had not moved. Lara stepped forward and touched his shoulder. He stirred uneasily, muttered as if in pain, but did not lift his head. She pressed her hand more heavily upon his soiled coat.

"Yes, yes—what is it?" he said in a quick, frightened way.

The haggard face turned up to her. The jaw dropped a little. His eyes, though fixed upon her own, seemed to have lost their direction. He gained his feet slowly, clutching the table with his hands.

"I have come to go with you—to your ship," she declared abruptly.

"Breen, come here to me," he called, brushing his face roughly with his hand.

"It's not a dream, Peter," Breen answered cheerfully. "I found her waiting for you at the plantation house."

"No. It is I—Lara!"

He put his hand forth to touch her. She caught it in her own. Pere Rabreau entered the rear door.

"And now," Breen was saying, "you two must not forget that Pelee is still alive, and that my part is still undone while you are here—even though together."

He spoke in English, which neither Soronia nor her father understood.

"But are you not going?" Lara asked.

"Oh, no, Miss Stansbury," Peter understood. I have told him that Nicholas Stenbridge ceases to compromise him after this night. It really is the better, the only way."

He turned to Pere Rabreau and added lightly in French: "Our guests are going. Let us all start a last sunrise of Epernay."

"But you know that I do not feel as the others do, but—as your friend does. Really, I am not afraid of you," she said unsteadily. There were tears in her eyes.

"It is a beautiful ending," Breen answered.

"I want you to know that I shall always remember your coming—your words when I would have failed!" she finished.

There was a moment in which Breen and Constable stood close together. Lara and Soronia were whispering, and strange it was, but out of their whispers was evolved a kiss.

"Look, Peter—the lily and the tiger lily bend together," said Breen.

The door was shut behind them. They faced the harbor and started down the sloping way.

"But you—?" she whispered.

CHAPTER XIII.

Constable's mind was slow to inform this great concept. The day had left behind in his brain a crowd of unassimilated acts, and into this dull, formless company swept the climacteric joy. Figuratively speaking, he had to grope about until lantern and matches were brought together, before he could adjust and measure and proportion. He halted at last in the empty street, seized the girl by her shoulders, saying, as one would evoke the heart out of a miracle:

"Lara Stansbury! Lara Stansbury!"

"Yes, Sir Peter?"

"Don't laugh at me; don't grow impatient for I must ask questions."

"Begin. I shall be very good."

"Are you the little girl who handed me a newspaper this morning?"

"I am that little girl grown up, sir."

She revelled in the joy she was giving him, and thrilled under the tightening pressure of his hands upon her shoulders.

"And when you grew up—you came to me?"

"Please, sir, you said you would take me sailing."

"Lara, as I looked down the fiery throat of that dragon to-day, everything black and still like a vacuum. I thought it was death then. Tell me, did I come back, or are we two hurrying shapes in twilight land—in no man's land?"

"I'm sure you must have come back, sir, because I didn't die to-day, and we can't be talking together on different planes—with your fingers impaling my shoulders!"

"Lara Stansbury—are you mine?"

The huge fellow was lost in his labyrinth of happiness. The doubts that had smothered her answer were lifted now, and he heard his victory without a breath

of its expression hampered. The shop had vindicated her daring. With all the eagerness of brimming womanhood, which burns the bonds of repression for the first time, she gave him her heart of hearts. She was like a queen who summons a man of her people into her inner sanctuary and bids him rule herself and her kingdom. Resilient, trembling, whispering, she was drawn into his arms.

"To think I didn't know you when you first came!" she was saying faintly. "But when I was a little girl I knew you—used to be frightened because you were so big."

"Always then I knew you would come some time to take me away for your lady, and I thought I would cry when you came, because I would be so happy. That part didn't come true, did it, Strongheart?"

"They were all dreams, baby dreams, as if left over from some other betrothal with you! And when I grew into a big girl, Sir Peter, I was ashamed, and put them away, with other baby thoughts and things!"

"Ah, listen to old Pelee!"

The volcano had lost his monstrous rhyms and was ripping forth irregular crashes. Rue Victor Hugo was alive with voices, aroused by the hideous rattling in the throat of the mountain. The old dread fell again upon Constable. He drew the girl forward, almost running.

"I beg of you, don't look back!" he warned.

"The launch is just ahead!"

"Hello, Ernest! I have kept you waiting long," he called as they neared the end of the pier. "Top speed to the Madame!"

The bells of Saint Pierre rang the hour of two. The launch was speeding across the smoky harbor, riding down little isles of foam, dead birds in the water, and nameless mysteries from the polluted bed of the harbor. The wind was hot in their faces, like a stake-hold blast. Often he heard a hissing in the water, like the sound of a wet finger touching hot iron. A burning cinder fell upon his hand, a messenger from Pelee, and clearing the source of the sound, he jerked off his coat and tossed it about her shoulders, which the filmy shawl and the delicate fabric of her waist scarcely protected.

"But you—?" she protested.

"I could not feel free to-night!"

Her face in the lantern-ray enchanted him. In mingled shyness and ecstasy he took it between his hands. He could not speak for the marvel of the thing—that this, so vibrant, so beautiful, was for him to kiss and worship and keep bright. Her cheeks were as soft as a flower, her eyes glowing with the ardor which the tropics alone can inspire in flower and woman. In the strange light, he gazed with the raptness of one who seeks to penetrate the mystery of being—as if there was any clearer in a woman's eyes than in a Nile night, a Venetian song, or in the flow of gasoline to the spark, which filled the contemplation of Ernest.

"Beloved," he whispered at last. "I will tell you how much I love you at our golden wedding."

He heard the swift intaking of her breath with the peculiar tremble which follows tears. The launch was swinging around to the Madame's ladder. Wherever the ship lights fell, the sheeting of ash could be seen—upon mast and railing and plates.

"Are you frightened, dearest?" he whispered.

"You will not go back to Saint Pierre?"

"We need not think of that now. We are going together first—out into deep water and ocean air!" He was helping her up the ladder. When they reached the main deck, he called to Captain Negley on the bridge: "Pull us out of this blizzard, captain—a dozen miles if necessary, and quick as you can."

They had scarcely reached the bridge before the anchor chain began to grind. Three minutes later the Madame's screws were kicking the ugly harbor tide. They watched, until only the dull red of Pelee pierced the thick veil behind; until a star, and another, pricked the blue vault ahead, and the air blew in fragrant as wine from the rolling Caribbean.

"How sweet life is to me!" Constable said softly. "Grand old Pelee—he has been true!" He made one his hair, and waited for me to carry his latest daughter out into these reviving winds. Blow, old Vulcan, now! 'Splash at a ten-league canvas with brushes of comets' hair!" And you, gorgeous girl, have you any charity for a man who grows incoherent from sheer joy?"

"Yes, even though he forgets the city," she answered.

Captain Negley approached them.

"We're about a dozen miles out now, sir," he said.

"Cruise around until daylight, captain; then draw in until you can find bottom to hitch to, but not any closer than seven or eight miles."

"Very well, sir."

Lara and Constable leaned over the aft railing of the bridge. The main deck below swarmed with women of Saint Pierre. They could not stay below, now that the defiled harbor was behind. Many were humming the old French lullaby to their little ones. Good food and cool air had brought back the songs of peace and summer to those lowly hearts.

"Lara, do you think if I went back to your mother now, or, rather, after daylight, I could persuade her to join us?"

"I know it would come to that," she said, with a shudder. "I have been trying to put it off. Can't you guess that I had a bitter piece to pay before following your friend to-night? She will not join us."

"I am going back to try, Lara. I think I can guess something that you passed through before leaving the house."

"Oh, no, you cannot! I could not suffer you to hear the words she uttered. It was like the wrath of Pelee—only causeless and without warning."

(To be continued.)

London's net municipal debt amounts to \$223,101,350.

## EVENTS OF THE DAY

### News 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.

Latest reports from Governor-elect Congrove, of Washington, say he is improving.

In a riot between German and Italian students at Vienna, more than 150 were injured.

In a raid on clubs of St. Louis for dispensing liquor out of hours, 832 men were arrested.

Admirals Dewey, Schley and Evans defend the navy against the critics of battleship construction.

The British government proposes to spend \$500,000,000 on purchases of land from Irish landlords.

About 1,000 delegates are expected to attend the dry farming congress at Cheyenne, Wyoming, in February.

Lord Roberts has called on Great Britain to provide 1,000,000 men to prevent a possible German invasion.

Charles F. Daly, vice president of the New York Central lines, was an ordinary telegraph operator six years ago.

John D. Rockefeller disclaims the glory of organizing the Standard Oil company. Henry M. Flagler and Samuel C. T. Todd conceived the idea, he says.

A New York paper claims to have received advices from Panama that the great Gatun dam has been washed out. Washington officials say they have heard nothing of it.

Henry is now reported out of all danger.

Governor-elect Congrove, of Washington, is much worse.

Kaiser Wilhelm's last speech was prepared by his ministers.

A steamer blew up on the lower Mississippi river, killing 10 men.

Six missing Montana miners were crushed to death in a mine near Helena.

Harriman is reported to have secured control of the Wisconsin Central railway.

Wreckage from an unknown vessel is drifting ashore at Vancouver island, B. C.

Moritz Rosenthal, chief counsel for the Standard Oil, gets a salary of \$1,000 a day.

Admiral Sperry has refused to let the crews of the fleet land at Manila because of the recent outbreak of cholera.

At the inquest Mrs. Haas testified that she did not give her husband the revolver with which he committed suicide and knew nothing about it.

Officials of the Mare Island navy yard have received orders to repair the gunboat Bennington. This is the vessel on which the explosion occurred four years ago when 67 men were killed.

A gas explosion at Redding, Cal., injured four persons and caused an earthquake panic.

Russia will make an attempt to secure rights to make and use the Wright aeroplane.

Railroads are preparing to substitute telephones for telegraph in the dispatching of trains.

Los Angeles business men have petitioned the president to keep the battleship fleet in the Pacific.

The inquest on Haas failed to solve the mystery of how he got the revolver with which he shot himself.

German statesmen are trying to calm the agitation against the kaiser. Von Buelow is anxious to retire.

The official returns have just been compiled in Missouri on the presidential vote. Taft received 346,915 and Bryan 345,889.

Judgment has just been given railroads against Cook county, Illinois, for \$100,000 damages caused by the strike riots of 1894.

The Iowa supreme court has just decided that the football year ends with Thanksgiving. A trainer was suing for salary on a broken contract.

Pacific coast hopmen want higher tariff on hops.

English financiers are anxious to get Philippine railway bonds.

Germany doubts the kaiser's sincerity and the agitation to restrict his power continues.

The last edict of the dowager empress of China was an order for reforms to continue.

Admiral Evans has become president of a new steamship company with its home office in Los Angeles.

## REGENT FEARS REBELLION.

### Heavy Guards Placed at All Gates of City of Peking.

Peking, Nov. 24.—While all is quiet in Peking, detachments of troops guard the city gates and gendarmes are on duty at the approaches to the foreign legations. The government has not ceased to take precautionary measures, for revolutionaries are spreading all kinds of reports, which might act like firebrands to the spirit of uneasiness underlying present conditions in China.

There have been rumors of an insurrectionary movement in the South, but this has proved to be only a minor outbreak among the artillery and cavalry stationed at Nankin.

Nevertheless, it has been thought advisable to post a guard at each of the gates of Peking, and half companies of Chinese regulars are now under arms at these points.

It was owing to one of these disturbances that the edict of November 20 was issued, in which it was pointed out that lawless conspirators had tried to invade the interior, and all officials were ordered to arrest and summarily behead them wherever found.

Stringent measures have been taken here to suppress any sign of conspiracy, and the government has ordered an investigation of the governor of Nang Pui province, on account of a slight uprising that took place there.

## HOLDS TOWN AT BAY.

### Four Men Shot in Effort to Capture Mexican Hold-Up Man.

Reno, Nev., Nov. 24.—Detected as he was holding up the Court saloon in Battle Mountain late last night, a Mexican broke through the door and, running into Night Policeman Coon, shot the officer in the jaw; then held up the gathering crowd as it collected at the scene. Cowboys and miners called for assistance, and rushing the robber, were repulsed by his fire. Deputy Sheriff Titworth was hit in the groin, and two others were slightly injured.

The Mexican backed down the street, forcing everybody in sight to follow him. When he drew away from the saloons he ducked into the darkness. A suspect, seen by Deputy Sheriff Haas, was caught when boarding a freight train early this morning. The deputy sheriff called to the man to halt, but getting no response, shot the fellow in the leg. The town, aroused by the outrages, started on a man hunt; and farmers, hearing the shooting, came into town with their lanterns. They carried these lights about with them seeking the robber, and several times shot at each other when they thought they had "flushed" the dare-devil Mexican.

## CABLE USED FOR MAN HUNT.

### Man Chased Half Around World by Dispatches is Caught.

San Francisco, Nov. 24.—A man hunt, extending half way around the world, which was conducted by cable dispatches, came to an end today when local detectives boarded the steamer Mongolia and arrested L. E. Knollins, whose description is said to tally with that of L. E. Hancock, wanted by the authorities of North Carolina on a charge of embezzlement.

Hancock sailed from here several weeks ago and orders for his arrest were cable to Nagasaki. He left the ship at Honolulu, however, and returned to this city on the steamer Mongolia, which arrived today.

Knollins denies that he is Hancock, and says he is a member of the brokerage firm of Courtland, Babcock & Co., of 44 Pine street, New York. He was taken to the city prison pending the arrival of an officer from North Carolina.

## QUEEN LILLIUKALANI HERE.

San Francisco, Nov. 24.—Ex-Queen Lilliuokalani, of Hawaii, was a passenger on the Pacific Mail liner Mongolia, which arrived here today from the Orient, via Honolulu. Not a half dozen passengers on the steamer were aware that the frail old lady, plainly attired, and accompanied by one maid, was the ex-queen. She is traveling with Prince Kalaulani, better known as Prince Capiti, and Princess Kalaulani and will accompany them to Washington. The prince was re-elected delegate to congress.

## FAILS IN RECORD FLIGHT.

London, Nov. 24.—Word has been received here that the balloon owned by the Daily Graphic, which ascended from this city Wednesday morning last in an attempt to reach Siberia and break the long-distance record, was compelled to descend in a gale on Thursday night near Novo Alexandrovsk, Russia, after having traveled about 1,350 miles.

## SERVIANS LOSE SEVENTEEN.

Paris, Nov. 24.—A dispatch from Vienna says that a band of Servians, while crossing the Bosnian frontier, near Sevornik, was repulsed by Austrian troops. The Servians lost 17 men killed and the Austrians three killed.

## KILLED IN EXPLOSION

### Twenty-five Workmen Caught In Deep Hole in Brooklyn.

New York, Nov. 21.—Twenty-five persons are believed to have lost their lives in an explosion of gas which tore up a great section of Gold street, Brooklyn, yesterday. It is definitely known that 15 persons were buried under the hundreds of tons of earth and timber thrown into the air, and ten more were reported missing. The exact number of dead cannot be determined until those working to recover the entombed bodies dig through 50 feet of dirt, rock and a tangle of pipes and timber.

The explosion occurred in a 50-foot deep excavation that had been made in Gold street, between York and Front streets, where a water main was being laid. The gas main sprang a leak recently, and in a manner unknown a spark came into contact with the escaping gas. Immediately there was a terrific explosion, which lifted the surface for half a block in both directions, and shot dirt, paving stones and debris into the air.

When the smoke and dust cleared away it was seen that the street had been opened from door-step to door-step over an area of nearly a block. The loosened earth and debris had fallen into the excavation, burying the score of laborers who were at work when the accident occurred. Great tongues of flame shot out of the crevices, and beside them geysers of water leaped into the air from a water main that had been shattered.

## SPARK IGNITES ESCAPING GAS

### Water Main Breaks From Force of Concussion, Adding to Horror—Traffic Suspended.

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## NOT IN SHOE.

### Expert Gunsmith Says Haas Did Not Have Gun Long.

San Francisco, Nov. 21.—Chief of Police Biggy, whose resignation from the department will follow the outcome of the coroner's inquest into the suicide of Morris Haas, who shot himself in his cell at the county jail while guarded by several policemen, was shown yesterday to have been in possession of the chief and several detectives. There Biggy directed the search of the prisoner.

Should the jury find that Haas had the little derringer with which he committed suicide, in his shoe when searched, the fact will be taken as evidence to support charges of inefficiency which Detective William J. Burns declares will be brought against Biggy.

Captain Thomas S. Duke, who made the first search of Haas in the courtroom, produced Otto A. Bremer, a gunsmith, as an expert to prove that Haas did not have the weapon in his shoe when he shot Francis J. Henry. Bremer testified that if the derringer had been carried for any length of time in Haas' shoe the barrel would show rust. The derringer showed no sign of rust, and Bremer declared it could not have been carried next to the skin.

## MAKES IMMENSE PROFIT.

### Standard Oil Earnings Amounted to \$80,000,000 in 1907.

New York, Nov. 21.—For over five hours yesterday John D. Rockefeller, witness for the defense in the government suit to dissolve the Standard Oil company, faced an unceasing fire of questions from the federal counsel, Frank B. Kellogg, and when adjournment was taken until Monday the head of the oil combine was still being cross-examined on the charge that the company in its early days accepted rebates to the disadvantage of its rivals.

Mr. Rockefeller's cross-examination will probably not be concluded until late Tuesday, as Mr. Kellogg made it known that he would question Mr. Rockefeller on every detail of the company's business.

The enormous earning power of the oil combination was sharply brought out in yesterday's hearing, when Mr. Rockefeller, after stating that the Standard had paid dividends amounting to \$40,000,000 in 1907, said it had earned as much more, and that this was added to the company's surplus, which was stated by the government's counsel to be \$300,000,000. It was further declared by Mr. Kellogg that the company within the last eight years has earned nearly half a billion dollars.

## SIMON LEADS REVOLT.

### Simon Leads Revolt. Broken out in Southern Hayti. General Simon, ex-commander of the troops in the southern department, has seized the city of Les Cayes and the adjacent region. The telegraph line has been cut and government troops are surrounded by rebels.

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