

The White Sepulchre The Tale of Pelee

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CHAPTER III.—(Continued.) They had reached the highway. Constable was thinking that he would have journeyed across the world to study a laboring monster, like Pelee in his present stress, but the idea of the girl being in the shadow of danger took all the relish from the work.

"I should prefer to hear you discuss the treachery of volcanoes outside of the fire zone," she said, shivering. "It's like listening to ghost stories in a haunted house."

"I'll tell you the best way out of it," he declared. "I don't say that Pelee is about to rise and read Saint Pierre, but I want to take you all out to sea for a few days. The Madame will believe her prettiest with you on board."

"I can't imagine anything finer, but you know mother is not a graceful sailer."

"Unfortunately, any effort of mine to prevail upon her might spoil matters," Constable said.

"Oh, I don't think that," she replied; "but it will be something of a conquest for any one to shake her trust in Pelee. Still, I'll do what I can."

"And I'll begin work to-night upon Uncle Joey. By the way, Miss Stansbury," he added in a lowered voice, "don't you think that if I chose to stay here in Saint Pierre, your mother might consent more willingly to try a few days on the Madame? You know Pelee is more than ever interesting to me now."

"That would be entirely unthinkable," she replied hastily.

Pelee rumbled again, and the girl's fingers tightened upon his arm. The heavy wooden shutters of the plantation house rattled in the windless night, the ground upon which they stood seemed to vibrate at the monster's pain. The man was conscious of the fragrance of roses and magnolia blossoms above the aerial taint of the air. It was as if, through some strange freak of the atmosphere, a pressure was exerted upon the flowers, forcing a sudden expansion of perfume.

The young man was a clean, frank, bluish in the forehead. A sick-like whimping of a sick child was audible from the servants' cabins behind the big house.

"You'll spend with your mother to-night?" he whispered, as they walked back.

Mrs. Stansbury was on the porch. Her nicely modulated voice, as she spoke to her daughter, struck Constable with a cold force. The woman went indoors. Breen and Uncle Joey were in conversation. Constable drew his chair to the north end of the porch, and faced the mountain a vast black beast couchant under the dim stars. Since he had gazed in that direction from the ship the night before, the whole purpose of his life had changed. Then he had asked no sweeter favor of the Fates than to be permitted to observe the giant's struggle to contain the fury of his fluids. Now his thoughts were magnetized by a new substance—the substance of fear. Self, the tribute of all his reckonings heretofore, had been lifted from his brain, as a familiar volume is lifted from his case.

"I know it," he muttered. "I know it five years ago, that I should come back here some day, look upon that girl, and become a man like other men. To think that I could stay away from her a year at a time!"

He recalled the double chain of lights out in the harbor, the Madame pulling at her moorings among the lesser craft, like a lustreous empress in the midst of dusky maidens. Between the black mountain and the illumined ship stretched a battle. It was his own particular battle. His name was called from the island to win war, to run as his last. Yesterday a colossal contribution to the imperfect records of cosmology, such as was now within his grasp, was identified with his highest ambition. To-day the safety of the woman towered above it, as the dome of St. Peter's above the head of a tourist. He was afraid of Pelee. Breen drew over to him and sat down upon the railing.

"What's on your mind, Peter?" "A mountain," said Constable.

"Rain did not fall in the night, and Constable was abroad with the dawn, regarding the white world and the source of the phenomenon, with the sketchy tints of earliest morning upon the huge eastern slope. He had slept little, and that with his face turned to the north. He would scarcely close his eyes before a cortege of volcanoes would pass before him, as in a dream—all the destroyers of history, each with a vivid individuality, like the types of faces of all nations—the story of each, and the smear it had made of men and the works of men.

Most of them had given warning. Pelee was warning now. His warning was written upon the veins of every blade, painted upon the curve of every blade of grass, sheeted evenly white upon the tiles of every roof. Gray dust blown by steam from the bursting quarries of the mountain, clogging the throats of the city, and the throats of men! It was a moving white cloud in the rivers, a chalky shading that marked the highest reach of the harbor tide. It settled in the hair of the children, and contaminated the toil of the bees in the nectar-cups of the roses. With league-long cements, and in a voice that caused to tremble his dwarfed cohorts, the hills and morning, great Pelee had proclaimed his warning in the night.

Constable was standing in the garden. "Good old Vulcan, to wait for her!" he murmured. "Sit tight for another day, and keep a stiff bridle-arm—for any more day."

"It isn't really ash, you know," he found himself saying at breakfast, "but rock ground as fine as neat and shot out by steam through Pelee's valves."

"How intensely graphic!" Mrs. Stansbury observed.

"It's a graphic morning," said Breen, "and Peter is circling from a night of meditation. I believe he has made a covenant with the mountain."

Constable had met the eyes of the daughter, and found no hope there. He had taken his uncle apart and charged him to labor for the cause of flight.

"Ursula," the planter began gravely, addressing Mrs. Stansbury. "Peter has asked us to spend a few days with him in the Caribbean, on board the Madame. I confess that I don't like the way Pelee is acting, and the heat is telling on us all. The prospect of a refreshing breath of the Trades is a mighty pleasant one to me. Doesn't it sound so to you?"

"As a specialist in volcanoes, I should think Mr. Constable would find it impossible to leave at such a time," the elder woman answered smoothly. "The mountain needs his doctor more than ever now."

"I have not yet attained unto such a scientific passion that I can forget my friends entirely," Constable said earnestly. "For my part," he hastened to say, "Mr. Constable's invitation is immensely alluring."

Mrs. Stansbury's eyelids contracted ever so little, and she lingered upon the words of her ultimatum, as if there were a tang of pleasure in the utterance. "The Panther arrives day after to-morrow morning, with the New York mail. I would not under any condition think of leaving Saint Pierre before receiving Mr. Stansbury's letters."

Constable stared at the face of the daughter. He read there terror of the mountain, and pity for himself. He arose, not daring to trust himself to speak again. Breen found him in his room a few minutes later.

"Peter," he said softly, "has it ever occurred to you that the map of Europe and the history of France might greatly have been altered if our beloved Josephine had been gifted with a will like that?"

CHAPTER IV. In the Rue de Rivoli there was a little stone fruit shop. The street was short, narrow, crooked and ill paved—a cleft in Saint Pierre's terrace work. Just across from the vault-like entrance to the shop, the white, scarred cliff arose to another flight of the city. Between the shop and the living rooms behind there was a little court, shaded by mango-trees. Dwarfed banana shrubs flourished in the shade of the mangoes, and singing birds were caged in the lower foliage. Since the sun could find no entrance, the shop was dark as a cave, and as cool. One window, a thirteen-inch gun could be called a window, opened to the north; and from it, by the grace of a crook in the Rue de Rivoli, might be seen the mighty calibered one of Pelee.

Pere Rabaut's fruit was very good, and some of it was very cheap. The service was much as you made it, for if you were known you were permitted to help yourself. In this world there was no one of station too lofty to go to Pierre Rabaut's; you would meet no one there to whom it was not a privilege to say "Bon jour."

"Come and see my birds," the crafty Rabaut would say, if he approved of you.

"Where do you live?" you might ask, being a stranger.

"In the coolest bowl of Saint Pierre," was the invariable answer.

And presently, if you were truly alive, you would find yourself in the little stone shop, listening to the birds. In due course Soronia would appear in the shadow doorway and it would seem that the bird songs were hushed as she crossed the court.

If the little stone shop were transplanted in New York, artists would find it and have difficulty in getting in and out, for the crowd of nights. Thither Constable and Breen made their way on this burning morning which Mrs. Stansbury darkened with her decision. The pair sat down in the cherished coolness, Constable at the little window, so that he could look out at the mountain.

"Breen, I dare not leave them here for forty-eight hours, until the Panther comes," Constable said.

"Do you really think Pelee can't hold out that long?"

Constable shook his head impatiently. "I'm not a monomaniac—at least, not yet, Breen," he said, and his voice suggested the world of pent savagery in his brain.

"The ways of volcanoes are past the provisions of men. I do not say that Pelee will blow his head off this week, or this millennium. I say I'm afraid for this instant. I say there are results of explosives in that monster, the smallest of which could make this city look like a leper's corpse upon the beach. I say that the internal fires are burning high; that they are already fingering the vital cap; that Pelee sprung a leak last night, and that the same force which lifted this cheerful archipelago from the depths of the sea is pressing against the leak at this instant. I say that Krakatoa warned before he broke; that Krakatoa warned and then struck; that down the ages those safety valves scattered over the face of earth have trembled before giving way. Pelee is trembling now, and there is a woman here whose safety is—important to me. She is two miles away this moment, and I am as powerless as a man in a street fight, with his lady's arms about him. What shall I do?"

"Peter, there is a short cut," Breen said.

"Tell me!" Constable urged.

"Are you zealous and strong-souled?"

"Try me."

At this juncture Soronia entered the shop from the little court of the song birds, filling the eyes of the Americans. A dark, ardent, alluring face; flesh like dull gold, made wonderful by the faintest tints of ripe fruit; eyes that could melt and burn and laugh; a fragile figure, but radiantly bloom, and as worthily draped as a young palm in a vine richly blossoming. Such, vaguely, was Soronia. She made one think of strange, regal flowers, an experiment of Nature, wrought in the most sumptuous shadow of a tropic garden. She was gone. Breen's face bore a drained look.

"An orchid?" he whispered. "Will the visitation be repeated? Do I wake or sleep?"

"Old Pere Rabaut married a French woman," Constable observed.

"Some Daphne of the islands, she must have been, since Pere Rabaut does not seem designed to father a snarler," Breen added, his eyes lost in the shadows of the court, from whence the bird songs came.

Pere Rabaut was a worthy soldier of France, I have heard," said Constable. "I have never seen the mother, but every year I have seen Soronia—for a moment like this. She was but a child when I came first—five years ago—but a radiant child even then."

"Five years ago," Breen mused. "Five years ago I had not ceased to paint. I should have put her on canvas."

There was a moment of silence, then Constable said in a low voice, "I must go back. Tell me the shorter way."

"Peter, you are a man, and she a woman. Forgive me, but I know what has sprung into your heart in the past twenty-four hours from the seeds that have been there five years. Tell her—tell her all about those five years and the one day—what they have meant to you, and your dream of the future. If you tell her mightily enough, she will follow you to the Madame, and cast no longing look behind. I shall stay here for an hour or two."

Constable left the shop. He was very miserable, full of undirected wrath. Never in his life before had there been a time when a stiff shoulder, dollars, an athletic mind, or all three, had failed entirely to move an obstacle in his way. Here he was ground by impotence absolute. The suggestion of Breen entailed such a deep and vital thing that he dared not think of it, here in the glaring day, with the panting crowd about him. It was against the very structure of his mind to act precipitately in this, of all matters, most delicate. It is true that he meant now to win Lara Stansbury, if such a stately citizen lay within range of a man of his caliber; but he had vouchsafed to strike only after a flawless investment were laid.

Breen did not return for luncheon, and the name of Pelee was not heard. In his room, afterward, Constable fell asleep, with his face to the north. He awoke out of a horrid dream, in which black fingers were tightening, like a garrote, upon his throat. It was the ash and sulphur fumes again. Pelee was obscured by the fresh fog. Instantly, upon awakening, the old thoughts and dreams resumed their hateful swing in his brain.

The sight of the Madame, lying out in the harbor, her needle-loom pointed like a black, fleshless finger across the smoky sunset, whipped him again to the sense of action which had no means of expression. Thoughts of the night—the locked doors, the still halls, the wall of children from the native cabins, sleeplessness without hope, vigilance without meaning, and this new master-romance shining far and bright and alone, like a brave star above wind-burled clouds—out of these were moulded thoughts of little mercy, as the shadows grew long upon the whitening lawn.

Pelee's moods were variable that afternoon. The twilight brought ease again, and with the old freshness of evening came a glad hour of reaction. There was a rippling wave of merriment from the dark quarters, and a score of children went blithely forth to bathe in the sea. Never before was the volatile, tropic soul so imperiously evidenced—simple hearts which glow at little things, whose swift tragedies come and go like blighting winds, which may stay but leave no wound.

Constable was ashamed for the moment. Throughout the day his eyes had fixed in stubborn gloom upon a catwalk. Up the stairway, airily as laughter, came a bright melody from the piano. He was thrilled, and held, and his mind was stirred with tenderness. She was like her island people, quick to enter the groves of serenity when the black cloud had blown by. Could Breen be right? he thought. The suggestion appealed to him now in a new high-light. Were there not some words which had never yet found the ears of woman from the lips of man—some key to instant sympathy in the undiscovers country of a lovely woman's nature?

(To be continued.)

AGATES FOUND IN OREGON. More Valuable Than Those Which Come from Germany or Mexico.

Walter H. Whitten of Newberg was in the city recently displaying a portion of his wonderful collection of agates, says the Portland (Ore.) correspondent of the New York Herald.

Whitten has been toiling away for twenty years, accumulating agates off the Oregon coast, principally near Newport, and it is doubtful if there is a larger or finer collection anywhere in the world than is possessed by this man.

Whitten stated that he is installing machinery and equipment in his lapidary at home so that he can grind and polish the rough agate, no matter of how great size, obviating the necessity of shipping the raw stone to Germany and shipping the finished agate back again, on which the duty must be paid both ways.

"The finest rough agates in the world are found right on the Oregon coast at Newport," said Mr. Whitten, "and I will enter them against the finest and rarest found in Arizona, Mexico or in Germany. For more than twenty years I have been gathering them, until now it has become a second nature to me, and I am now negotiating for the installation of sufficient modern machinery to handle the whole output of the United States right here at Newberg, where I live, saving the cost of shipment abroad, as well as the duty both ways."

"Every kind of agate known is found in the siliceous deposits at Newport—the carnelian, the cloudy, the moss, the coral, the moonstone, the Jasper and so on. The winter is the best time to find them, for during this season the ocean current changes its direction and washes away the surface sand clear to the gravel, in which deposits the rough agates of all kinds may be found. Sometimes the agate 'season' lasts but a couple of weeks, depending entirely upon the inexplicable caprices of the sea, the winds, the tide and currents."

"The pure grayish white silica gives us the soft warm-tinted coral agates, the dark silica with oxides of manganese are the base of the cloudy and the moss, while the red silica with iron gives us the carnelian and the Jasper, and where both iron and manganese occur we have the moonstone."

"The coral and the cloudy are the finest and most delicate of tint and suggest purity, while the carnelian and the Jasper are the warm, rich, glowing stones, perhaps the most valuable and most eagerly sought."

"As soon as I get my lapidary in shape I shall reach out beyond the local market and enter active competition against the German and other imported varieties. The agate-making is a home industry entirely overlooked and one in which we can not only expect the foreigners in the reality of the raw material, but in the variety and supply."

Right in it. Wiswell—Charley isn't a bad fellow socially, but he's a dead failure in money matters. Why, I actually believe he owes everybody in town?

Wrightly—And you call that a dead failure? I should say that Charley is a Napoleon of finance.—Boston Transcript.

For Its Very Own. There's one thing that seems to me funny. When the state of a bank becomes runny, you're supposed to go back and sit down. It's a fact they get mad if you ask for your money.—Lippincott's.

It is asserted that the drum was the first musical instrument used by human beings.

AMUSEMENTS

AT THE CHICAGO THEATERS.

GREAT NORTHERN.

Bright, and brimming over with fun, "Wine, Women and Song" is being offered in the Great Northern Theater, Chicago, where it is a thing of beauty and a joy forever. The piece is filled with burlesques and travesties, and with songs and dances, and is effective and as full of life as a young colt. There are numerous good imitations in the cast, and they do imitations of all the noted stars in the theatrical firmament, as well as travesty some of the big acts in the reigning successes of the time. Bonita, who has been called one of the most beautiful women on the stage to-day, is the center of attraction, and her gowns are the talk of the city. There is no plot in evidence, and the entertainment consists in the main part of songs, dances and burlesques. The ensemble numbers are beautiful, and there are many unique features in the offering. Matinees Sunday, Wednesday and Saturday.

MAJESTIC.

One of the notable events of the vaudeville bill at the Majestic Theater, Chicago, for the week of June 1st, will be the appearance of Flo. Irwin, sister of the celebrated May, of the same name, in a one-act comedy by the famous humorist George Ade, entitled "Mrs. Peckham's Carouse." Miss Irwin as Mrs. Peckham, an elderly lady, whose chief delight is in the regulating of other people's morals, has a role well suited to her refined comedy methods. Another big act will be "Our Boys in Blue," America's greatest patriotic military sensation. Kara, the juggler, the originator of all that is new in this line of work. A smart musical interlude by the Frederick Brothers, and Miss Jessie Burns, while the funny sayings and songs of Hovey & Lee, Hebrew character comedians, will be sure to keep their audiences by a state of laughter during the time they occupy the stage. Miss Ida Hawley, late prima donna of the original production in New York of "The Lady From Lane's"; Jimmy Lucas, a Chicago boy, who has won fame on the stage by his clever imitations, will be another added feature. Mueller & Mueller, with songs, will be featured, as will Anna Chandler, the singing comedienne. There are a number of other smart acts on this bill, which also includes splendid motion pictures showing the arrival of Admiral Evans' great fleet into San Francisco harbor and the great floral parade tendered them by the citizens of the Pacific coast.

GARRICK.

"THE FLOWER OF THE RANCH." The people who like the stirring life of the plains will see it well pictured at the Garrick Theater, Chicago, when Joseph E. Howard and Mabel Harrison will be seen in the latest musical comedy success, "The Flower of the Ranch." Howard, who, besides being a well known star, has gained popularity as the composer of the particularly catchy music of "The Time, the Place and the Girl," "The Empire" and "The Land of Nod," is said to have surpassed himself in "The Flower of the Ranch." All of Mr. Howard's music has a popular swing, and is well worth hearing and playing. Particular attention has been paid to the costuming of "The Flower of the Ranch," and the chorus has five changes, with each set of costumes a marvel of elaborateness. Mabel Harrison will be favorably remembered by local theatergoers for her clever work in "Babes in Toyland," "The Wizard of Oz" and "The Land of Nod," and is considered by critics all over the country to be the foremost tragedienne of child life on the stage to-day. Seats for this big production are now on sale at the Garrick Theater box office. The Garrick summer prices will prevail—evenings and Saturday matinees, \$1.00 for best seats; Wednesday matinees, 25, 50 and 75 cents.

"GIRLS" AT CHICAGO OPERA HOUSE. "Girls," by Claude Fitch, will introduce to the theatergoers of Chicago at the Chicago Opera House next Sunday, May 31st, a new kind of stage girls. Unlike those we have seen, who, no matter how natural they may seem, are never quite able to make the audience lose sight of the grease paint and glamour of footlights, these girls—there are three of them—are said to be the real thing. They do not act, they do not speak lines and do things arranged by some one else; they simply live in public the private life of a trio of bachelor maids, who swear frequently and solemnly to be independent of men, and these oaths are broken in the same delightful way that they have been since the first woman made up her mind she could live without man, and then found she couldn't. Clyde Fitch has always known how to transplant real women from various grades

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of life to the stage where his plays have been seen, but in "Girls," it is said, he has outdone himself in this, his best line.

HENRY LEE'S "MIMIC WORLD" AT THE AUDITORIUM. "The Passing Show" first feature of startlingly novel entertainment. Admission price of 25 cents throughout the house afternoon and evening.

The activity and daily life of the world's royal and prominent personages and scenic wonders, gathered from the four corners of the earth, will be features of Henry Lee's "Mimic World," which, under the title of "The Passing Show," will be disclosed for the first time on any stage at the Big Auditorium next Sunday afternoon. Gathering materials for this entertainment, Mr. Lee has circumnavigated the globe. From far away India he has brought the princely palaces and lowly hovels of Calcutta and Bombay, picturing the official and Coolie life from the fount of Kipling's most fascinating romances. Italy, England, France, Germany, Russia, Austria, and their nobility, contribute their quota to this unique entertainment, in which love, despair, comedy and humor are intermingled. Interesting description will be provided by Mr. Joseph Kilgour, an actor of international distinction. The performances will begin at 1 p. m. and 7 p. m., and will run continuously every afternoon and evening. The price of admission has been fixed at the low scale of 25 cents for any seat in the Big Auditorium.

MVICKER'S. The second summer's run of "Brewster's Millions" is proving the biggest theatrical magnet in Chicago. McVicker's Theater is crowded to capacity at every performance of the McCutcheon farce. Aside from its entertaining qualities the play possesses a wide

spread local interest. It is the creation of a Chicago author, its central figures Chicagoans, and acted by a cast largely composed of Chicago favorites. It enters on its fourth week of unabated success at McVicker's. Edward Abies, one of the best actors on the stage and a great Chicago favorite, plays the stellar role of "Monty" Brewster, and dainty Edith Talliferro, who was last seen in support of Bertha Kalch in "Marta of the Lowlands," plays opposite him as "Peggy" Gray. Emily Lytton, who plays the part of Mrs. Dan De Mille, and Sumner Gard, who is Archibald Vanderpool of Chicago, in the play, also have a host of admirers. The plot is most ingenious, and "Monty" Brewster's desperate efforts to spend \$1,000,000 in a year afford a continuous flow of merriment. The great storm scene in the third act further challenges the interest and admiration of the patrons. The remarkable popularity of "Brewster's Millions" is attested by the fact that next Monday will mark its 94th consecutive week, with practically the same cast identified with its original production nearly two years ago.

"Mason and Dixon's line" is a reference to the boundary which was established in the years intervening from 1763 to 1767, between the colonies of Maryland and Virginia on the one side, and that of Pennsylvania on the other side, by Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon, who were two English civil engineers. So thoroughly was the allotted task performed by these young Englishmen that in 1849 revision of the survey failed to detect the slightest error. The United States government also, as recently as 1901, has caused the Maryland portion of the noted boundary line to be again revised.

The Mikado has a corps of sixty doctors and thirty priests.

Talk that Tells Well. They were a group in the St. Francis lobby talking Hawthorne, says the San Francisco Chronicle.

"Let's go up to Bonneau's room," suggested one of the gathering. "Too many people down here listening to everything we say."

"And you claim to be a Nevada mining man?" asked Frank Bonneau, in a low voice. "Talk like this means salesmen. We stay right here as long as there are interested listeners."

Then, resuming his normal voice, he laughed and continued: "Well, right after he said that lucky strike he fished a new suit which was a wonder. He had hooded it out to Nevada without a bean. Now look what he's worth. Front of a saloon one day a fool practical joker slipped up behind and lighted his celluloid collar. Jury brought in 'justifiable homicide' and he gave the joker's family a cool \$50,000, which was big money for them, but nothing for him, with his rock running \$500 to the ton."

He Wears. Mr. Jones' costume at a masquerade ball was that of a Roman warrior, with metal helmet, breastplate, greaves, etc., which, as the evening wore on, occasioned him great discomfort. When the time came for unmasking Jones raised his visor, and a friend inquired whom he was supposed to represent.

"Are you Apples Claudius?" asked he. "No," replied Jones, wiping his streaming brow. "I'm not. I'm wearing as the devil!"—Lippincott's.

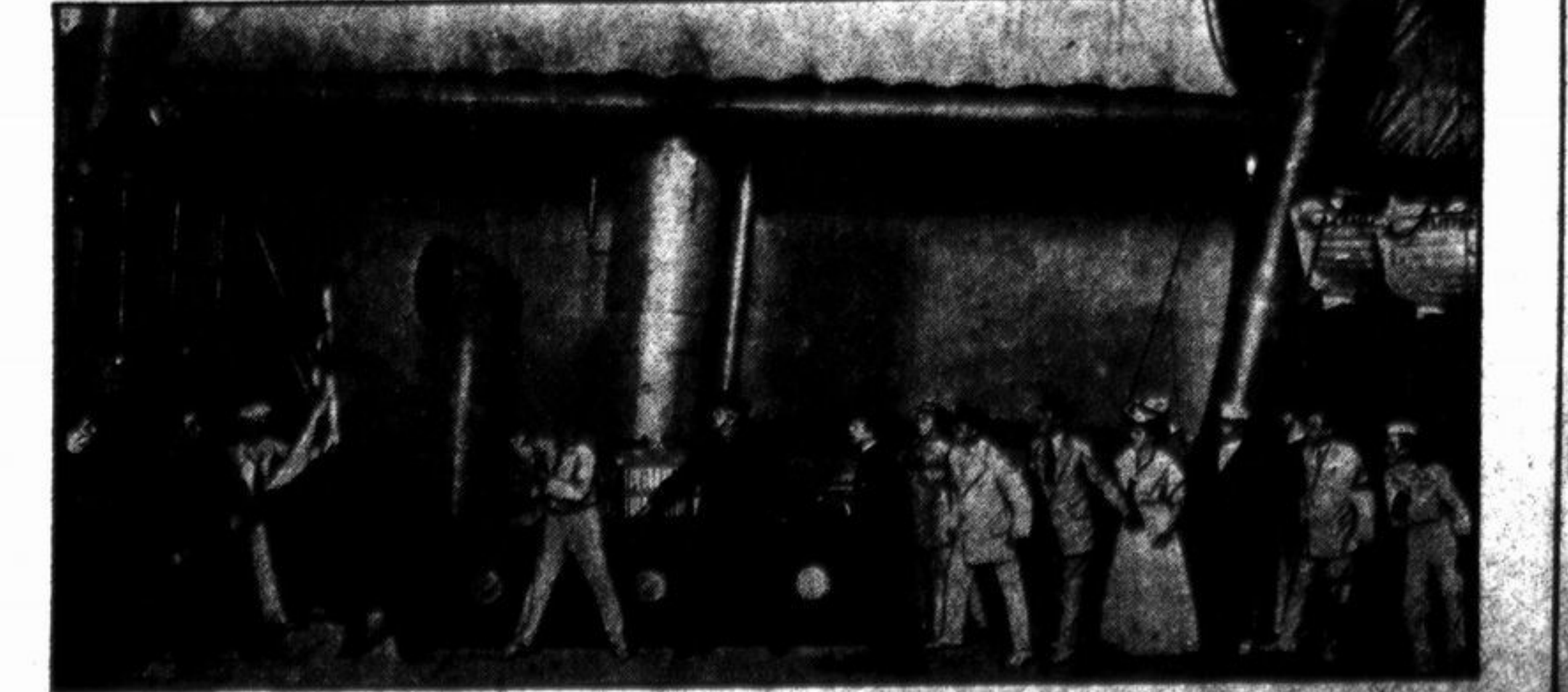
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