

THE WHITE DEATH

By DON MARK LEMON

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He was an American. He had come to the country in search of gold. It should have remained on his estate at home in Virginia. But no, he must come to South America and prospect in Tarantula valley. He proposed it first to his Mexican guide, Loco. Loco grew white about the lips, despite his tawny color, and shook his head.

"Why not?" the American questioned.

"The White Death, senior; it is there!"

"Where—in Tarantula valley?"

"What is the White Death?"

Loco drew his lips firmly together and again shook his head. Evidently the White Death was something to be silent about, as well as to fear.

"Is it a pestilence of some kind?" the American questioned.

"No, senior."

"Is it a snake?"

"No, senior."

"A wild beast?"

"No, senior."

"It death from poisonous gases?"

"No, senior."

"Is it death by the hand of men—banditti, for instance?"

"No, senior."

"Hunger? thirst?"

"No, senior."

"Then what the devil is the White Death?"

The American spoke angrily, but Loco made no reply. He only drew his lips tighter together and looked more frightened. The fellow—half savage that he was—feared he might draw the anger of the White Death upon himself should he describe its nature.

"Queer!" the American muttered, greatly perplexed. Then he tried polity. "Come, I'll double your pay if you'll act as guide."

"No, senior."

"Treble it."

"No, senior."

"Give you ten dollars a day—American gold."

"No, senior."

The American considered awhile. Then he said: "That decides me; I'll prospect Tarantula valley and see if I can't stack a mortgage on this White Death—and I'll go it alone."

The Mexican was a Catholic. He crossed himself and looked unhappy.

There was no reason he shouldn't look unhappy. He liked the American, in his rough way; besides the American's pay was good—and certain. And now the American was going to meet the White Death!

Having made up his mind to prospect Tarantula valley at any cost, the Virginian looked about for another guide than Loco, but his labor was wasted. No one would accompany him on his proposed prospecting tour, nor explain what was meant by the White Death.

Was it something so strange, so far removed from common nature, that human speech could frame no description of it? Or did the superstitions villagers fear that they might draw the anger of the White Death—whatever it was—upon themselves should they go into particulars?

The next day the American set out alone for Tarantula valley, very curious and not at all nervous. He was well provisioned—one burro bore his supply of food, another his blankets and mining outfit—and well armed. He didn't reason that there might be something lurking in the valley before him against which his Winchester would be no protection—some shape such as might haunt the infernal pool and make it more hideous than even a diseased poet could imagine. No; he didn't reason at all.

Tarantula valley, in appearance, was a pleasant place, with a wooded river flowing through it and a wooded lake or large pool, in its center. The American thought what a paradise it would be in which to dream away the rest of his life with One by his side who was waiting for him in Virginia.

Yet, despite the sylvan charm of the valley, the American grew lonely, for there really wasn't much society about. To be sure, there were the two burros, an occasional snake, a few horned toads, and some buzzards; but, apart from these, the dumb creatures to be seen were not at all sociable. Not sociable, at least, like the buzzards. They, in one particular, were almost as good as human society, taking, as they did, a very evident interest in the American's state of health.

One strange thing that impressed the Virginian were the collections of bones scattered over the valley, and especially about the lake. On his first day in the vale he had lighted on one of these collections of bones. He examined it. It looked like a little open-air cosmopolitan graveyard. Within a circle of about 20 feet in diameter were collected the skeleton of a burro, the skeleton of a buzzard, the skeleton of a large wild animal of the cat tribe, the skeleton of a cow, several skeletons the species of which the American couldn't determine, and last, but not least, the skeleton of a man.

It was evident that some wild animal had lately ravened in that part of the country, gathering into one feeding ground the prey of a month or so.

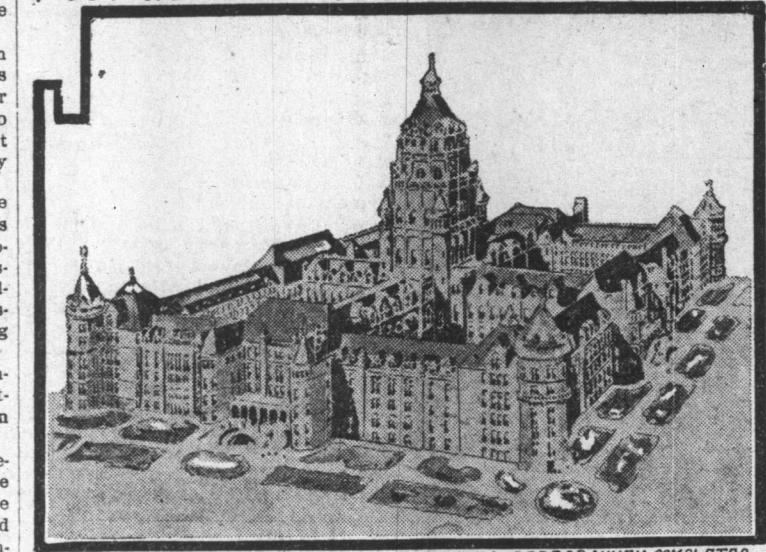
The second day he spent in the valley the American lighted on a second collection of bones. It was much like the first, only the human skeleton bleaching in the sun was that of a woman and not a man. At this the Virginian got very angry, though without especial reason. The woman, surely, couldn't have died any harder than the man.

The third day he lighted on a third collection of bones, and the skeleton of a man and woman lay side by side. With this he began to wonder seriously what manner of thing it was that had turned the valley into a charnel. Was it a great panther of some kind—or a huge snake? Or—but no, it couldn't be a man. That was something too hideous to believe. And a man or woman of men it was not.

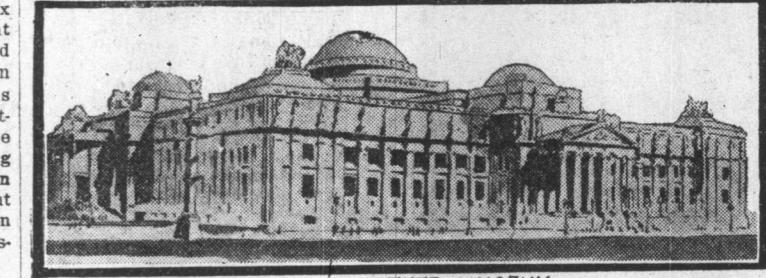
Then he struck gold. He slipped in

World's Palaces of Art

MOST SPLENDID MUSEUMS FOR NEW YORK CITY



HOW THE MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY WILL APPEAR WHEN COMPLETED



COMPLETED BROOKLYN INSTITUTE MUSEUM

When the three great museums of the Greater New York are completed in the years to come there will be given to the country and the world groups of art palaces the like of which the world has never before seen. They will represent an expenditure of \$50,000,000 exclusive of the priceless collections which will find shelter within the spacious walls of the institutions. The Metropolitan Museum of Art will be the largest building devoted to art in the world; the completed museum of natural history will overshadow the British museum, and the Brooklyn Institute museum is planned along the same magnificent lines.

The Natural History museum will be carried a step nearer completion this year by the opening of the south wing of the west facade and by a new approach to the central power house and tower. The museum, it is perhaps not generally realized, will ultimately considerably exceed in size the British museum. It is now nearly 20 years since the first hall was built, one of the interior wings, which is now almost completely hidden. Since then the entire south facade has been completed, an avenue block in length.

The new wing carries the line of the corner tower on the west nearly a city block northwest, thus giving the first suggestion of the appearance of the west front as it will ultimately appear. The great building will some day occupy the entire space facing Central park, measuring three city blocks in length and one avenue block in width. A great central tower will ultimately rise high above the present roof line.

Despite the apparently endless corridors of the present structure the museum is badly cramped for room. There are tons of valuable material, gathered at great expense, which it is impossible to display. Space in the wing with its five broad floors is, however, already heavily mortgaged. With many exhibits demanding space, it has been decided to devote the new wing to the new Congo and Philippine collections. The Congo exhibit, recently obtained in Belgium, of unusual popularity as well as scientific interest, is especially timely. It is believed it will make a very strong popular appeal and will amply justify the space devoted to it.

The first error was committed by transporting the ark by a cart instead of in the way ordained by God (Numbers 4). The ark was to be carried by

The next error grew out of this first one. The jagged bridge paths of those parts are not at all adapted for wheeled conveyances, and when the procession had reached Nachon's threshing-floor, the "oxen shook" the ark, "were throwing it down," and (6) "Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God," to keep it from falling to the ground. If he had carried the ark as he was commanded, he would not have been tempted to this second disobedience.

V. 7. "And the anger of the Lord was kindled." Not passion, but rather indignation—that feeling which makes him hate sin and compels him to punish it. All that was loving and good in God was aroused against the act. "And God smote him there."

Why this severity? (1) It was a direct, double disobedience. (2) The wrong was enhanced by the fact that it was committed by a man who as a son of Abinadab had been with the ark, and should have known the law.

(3) It was a public disobedience in matters of religion. It was a desecration of the holiest symbol of their religion. It was needful at the outset to impress to the people the necessity of exact obedience, and hence the careful study of God's law.

A Note of Encouragement. 1. There was real encouragement in the fact that God was so careful of the religion of the Jews that he expressed by his act the value of religion, and impressed it so deeply on their hearts.

2. The blessing that rested upon the family of Obed-^{Am} through the presence of the symbol of religion in his house was a foretaste and a promise, and a prophecy of what it would be to the nation.

The new wing of the Brooklyn museum has long been embarrassed for room, and the new wing will be quickly taken up. The second floor, according to the present plans, will be devoted to Robert Fulton and Hendrick Hudson and their times. The display of these collections will have a peculiar timeliness in view of the approaching Hudson anniversary. It is probable that the Henschel collection, the property of Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan, will also be allotted space in this wing.

Although the new wing, as seen from the street, appears to be practically complete, it is not expected that it will be regularly thrown open to the public for some months.

The new wing has so far cost \$2,400,000, and it stands to-day less than one-fourth complete. The central staircase and approach to the east wing cost alone nearly \$90,000. It is in some respects the most beautiful architectural feature in the city.

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