

The Scourge of Damascus

A Story of the East...
By SYLVANUS COBB, JR.

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CHAPTER VII.—(Continued.)

When the princess was alone, she trembled beneath the weight of the new thought that had been wrought upon her. Flight was something that had not made its way to her mind before, but now that it had been presented, she could not dismiss it. She had revealed her whole feeling, so far as the king was concerned, in her speech to Albia. There may have been other springs within her soul which she did not then dare to touch; but in her own soul, undisturbed and uninfluenced by other causes than such as spring from reason and reflection, had grown a fear of Horam, and a terror of being his wife. She had dreamed of poor Helena until the dead queen seemed almost an attendant spirit upon her, sent to warn her. The night passed, and the day came; and she had resolved that she would not marry with the old king if she could avoid it. When Albia came, and asked her what she had determined, such was the purport of her answer.

"But," said the bondmaid, "there is but one way in which the sacrifice can be avoided. Are you ready to flee?"

"Not yet—not yet, Albia. Wait through the day."

In the afternoon the king made a visit to the house of his prime minister and spent a short time with Ulin. He never looked more repulsive. He was loud in his words of love, and made the announcement that fortune had turned full in his favor. It was evident enough that he had been taking more wine than usual. When he went away, Ulin sank down upon a low stool, and buried her face in her hands.

"Albia," she said, when she felt like speaking, "I can bear no more. I would rather die than give myself to that man. If I should die, my father would lose me; but if I flee from Damascus, I may at some time return to him. If you can prepare for leaving the city, I will accompany you this very night."

The bondmaid promised that she would do all in her power; and without waiting to waste time in useless words, she went forth to search for the help she needed.

Evening came, and Ulin had not shrunk back from the decision she had made. There were two reasons why her home had not power to win her back from her resolve. The death of her mother had taken away the brightest part of that home; and, furthermore, its character of home was soon to be changed if she remained. It could not be her home any more.

CHAPTER VIII.

Hobaddan.

Thus sat the princess, presenting herself with every available reason that could favor her in her resolution, when Albia came in, with a quick step and a flushed cheek.

"My mistress," she said, when she had assured herself that they were alone, "there is a man in the garden who wishes to speak with you."

"A man!" cried Ulin.

"He says it is a case of life or death—of life or death to an individual, and of life or death to a city," pursued the bondmaid, without noticing the interruption. "He gained entrance to the garden, and has been searching for the lady Ulin. He did not tell me his name; but I know that he was with the robbers at the Palace of the Valley, and he says he is a friend of Julian. If you will see him now, I can conduct him up without danger of discovery."

"In mercy's name, Albia, what mean you?" The princess trembled like an aspen. "What can he want with me?" "I think he is an honest man, my lady; and I think you had better see him. I only speak my own feelings."

"Does he say that Julian sent him?" asked Ulin, trembling more violently as that name fell from her lips. "Julian did not send him," replied Albia; "and yet he comes in behalf of Julian. I think the noble young chieftain is in danger, and this man hopes that you may be able to render some assistance."

"Indeed, Albia, I must not do such a thing. It would not be proper. I must not do it. What is the robber chieftain to me?"

"I know not of a verity, my lady, that such is the man's hope; but I do know that he prays most earnestly to see you. Yet, if you will not see him, I will carry to him your word."

"What will he do if I refuse?"

"He will go away, and trouble you no more."

"Are you sure of this, Albia?"

"I am, my lady. He bade me say unto you that you should act your own pleasure. He urges no claim, and will take no offense at refusal, but he prayerfully asks that you will grant him audience."

The princess was not proof against the spirit which prompted to the reception of the robber. It was not wholly curiosity which moved her. There were feelings working within her which she could not have explained, even to herself. She told Albia that she might conduct the man to her apartment.

"You will come with him, Albia; and you will remain with me while he is here."

The bondmaid went away, and ere long returned, followed by a tall, stout, middle-aged man. As the rays

of the lamp fell upon his face, revealing features that were far above the average in their stamp of manhood, Ulin recognized him as one whom she had seen with Julian in the Valley of Lycianus. He bowed very low as he entered, and when he saw how the maiden was affected by his presence, he proceeded at once to open his business.

"Noble lady," he said, in a tone which might at once have banished all fear from the minds of his listeners, "I have come to you upon a most strange business, and I will use as few words as possible in presenting it to you. My young master is in danger."

"Do you speak of Julian?" asked the princess, with a slight start.

"Yes, my lady," replied the man, standing respectfully before her, with his cap in his hand.

"My name is Hobaddan, and I am Julian's lieutenant. I have been with him from the period of his earliest childhood. Since he was large enough to lift a lance, I have been his friend and companion. He was given into my care during his opening youth; and when he reached the estate of manhood I was content to serve him. I love him as a brother—aye, better than most brothers love. I love him tenderly and devotedly. And all his followers love him. A thousand stout men love and worship him."

"What did all this mean? Why had Hobaddan come to tell her this? Ulin trembled, knowing not wherefore, and gazed anxiously into the speaker's face.

"Lady," pursued the lieutenant, who had stopped a moment, as though he would assure himself that his language gave no offense, "my master is in danger. He is in the hands of his deadliest enemy. He is in this city—cast into a dark, deep dungeon, and Horam means to kill him!"

Ulin turned pale as death, and clasped her hands upon her bosom. Her look signified that she would ask how it happened.

"I will explain," continued Hobaddan, "how this misfortune befell my chieftain. Have you ever seen an Israelite named Judah?"

"I know him well," said Albia. "He is the king's slave."

"And two black men, named Osmir and Selim?"

"I know them also," answered the bondmaid.

"They came to our camp," said Hobaddan, "and told so fair a story that they were admitted to fellowship, and the blacks were placed as servants near the person of our chieftain. But the result proved that they were sent out by Horam, and that their mission was to capture the Scourge of Damascus. And this work they have accomplished. How they did it I cannot tell. I only know that we missed our leader, and that the three conspirators were missing with him. I came at once to this city, and have succeeded in discovering what I have told you. Julian is in prison, and of course the fate of death awaits him."

"But sir, said Ulin, struggling to speak calmly, "what can this mean to me?"

"Noble lady, I know that the thought of seeking you was a wild one; and perhaps you will say it was monstrous; but I could think of no other course. I know that your father was prime minister; and that you were in a position to wield some influence. There is not an officer in Damascus to whom I would dare to apply. Is there not some way in which you can help me?"

"How, sir? Help you in what?"

"In setting my young master free."

"Indeed, sir, you have taken a step most wild. How should I, the daughter of Aboul Cassem, dare to step in between justice and its victim?"

"Ah, lady," returned the lieutenant, "some of us think that others higher than Julian owe more to justice than does he."

"Still, sir," pursued Ulin, "it is most absurd to think that I could help you in this."

Did Ulin appear like one offended? No. Did she treat the name of Julian as though she deemed him worthy of the fate which threatened him? No. She seemed rather to be struggling to put away some feeling of a very different character. The lieutenant evidently read her nature, for he proceeded earnestly:

"Do not misunderstand me, lady. Were the work simply to set Julian free, I should not have visited you. The work I would give into your hands is the salvation of Damascus. If our master is slain by the king, this city must suffer terribly. The vengeance of those who love the chieftain will be dreadful. If Julian falls beneath the sword of the king's executioner, his followers will draw more blood from the life of this people than Polypes drew when he ravaged the city of the northern plain. To save all this, noble princess, can you not help me? Is there not some way in which you can remove the bolt from the door of the chieftain's prison-house?"

Ulin was trembling more violently than before.

"O, sir," she cried, giving full scope now to her feelings, "you find me powerless to help you. I have not the influence which you ascribe to me. If I had the power, I would not hesitate. If I were the jailer, and held the keys of the prison door, I would set your master free; but, alas! I am more weak than you imagine. I am

more like a prisoner than like a princess!"

At this juncture the bondmaid arose from her seat and moved forward. Her dark eyes sparkled with peculiar fire, and her fair brow worked as though the brain were revolving mighty thoughts.

"Dear lady," she said, addressing her mistress, "there is but one way in which we can render the assurance which this man seeks."

"Speak, Albia," said Ulin, betraying a suddenness of emotion which told very plainly how her desire ran.

"Not now, my mistress," returned the girl. "I must have time: If this man can come to our garden two hours past midnight, I can tell him more."

"Is there help?" asked Hobaddan, eagerly.

"I cannot tell you now," replied Albia. "I can only tell you this! If there is help, it is to be found only in one quarter. I will look for it there; and, at the time I have mentioned, you shall know the result. I will look for it if my lady is intruded."

"And I am pardoned for my intrusion?" said Hobaddan.

"Yes," returned Ulin. She would have said more, but Albia was already at the door, and the robber had turned to follow her.

CHAPTER IX.

The Dark Hour.

"It seemed like a dream to Ulin. She closed her eyes—and opened them—and arose—and walked across the chamber—simply to assure herself that she was awake. Was it possible that a member of the robber band had been to see her—had been within her chamber—had come, and had gone? A friend and companion of Julian's seeking her for aid in behalf of the chieftain? She was trying to make it appear real, when her bondmaid returned.

The door was closed, and Albia remarked, as she took a seat:

"He will be in the garden two hours past midnight, my lady; and if we can help him, we must do our work as speedily as possible."

"Help," repeated Ulin, gazing into her attendant's face. "How can we help Julian?"

"The thing may be possible," replied Albia, in a thoughtful mood. "If you would serve him, I think a way can be opened to the accomplishment."

The princess reflected a few moments, and then said:

"If the man who was here spoke the truth, it may become my duty to help him; and certainly his story seemed plausible. I can very easily see how the powerful robber band, moved to desperation by the death of their beloved leader, might wreak most terrible vengeance upon this city; and surely, if we can be the means of averting so dire a calamity, it is our duty so to do."

"I think it is," added Albia. "But," continued Ulin, "if Julian is in the power of the king, he must be in one of the strongest dungeons; and a strict guard must be kept over him. How can we reach him?"

"I can think of but one way," returned the bondmaid, laying down the plan with her finger as she proceeded. "Osmir and Selim had a hand in capturing the young chieftain; and it is not impossible that they may have a hand in guarding him. I judge so from the fact that the capture of the robber has not yet become generally known in the city, which would certainly have been the case if the king's officers had known it. Now we have some claim upon the gratitude of this Osmir, and I think he is, by nature, grateful enough to repay us. He is the man whom we found faint and dying upon the shore of the lake, and who must have died if we had not nursed him. You remember the circumstance?"

"He had almost been killed by some slaves of Aleppo," explained Albia. (To be continued.)

Even Family Secrets!

The inquisitorial proceedings of income-tax collectors in Austria are a source of great annoyance to self-respecting citizens. They pry into every family secret, however delicate. But now they do even more than that. They attempt to check the income of a man by finding out what is sent him by rail. The inspector of taxes at Myslenice, in order to give the screw another turn, has applied to the railway managers for permission to send an official to Makow station for a certain time in order to examine all parcels sent there or thence, and find out to whom or from whom they have been sent. Of course the purpose of such a demand is clear. Proof is required that certain persons spend more, and therefore have a greater income than they have declared, thus ignoring the fact that a man may possibly live beyond his income. At the same time it must be confessed that there is a great difficulty in getting people to give truthful declarations.

More Laughter, Less Suicide.

The physiological benefits of laughter can not be overestimated. It shakes up the diaphragm, sets the pulses beating to a lively measure, stimulates the blood corpuscles, enlivens the brain, and sometimes produces dislocation of the jaw when indulged in too heartily by a man with a large mouth. Used with discretion laughter is as inspiring as a sea breeze, as refreshing as an August shower. Its moral effect is beyond computation. It has killed more ridiculous superstitions by its rollicking roars of unbelief than any other agency, says the Literary Era. What can be more derisive than a laugh? The man who laughs never kills himself. That is the reason so few Irishmen commit suicide.

JUBILANT UNCLE SAM

AWFULLY BUSY, BUT FINDS TIME TO TALK.

Greatly Pleased with Our Export Trade of \$1,500,000,000, Treasury Balance, \$175,000,000 and Trade Balance of Nearly \$700,000,000.

I found Uncle Sam yesterday deeply absorbed in a mass of fiscal reports. The old gentleman fairly beamed as he gave me a hearty hand grasp, but when I told him I had come for another interview his manner seemed to relax a little, I thought.

"I'll tell you how it is, Uncle Sam," said I. "The people enjoyed your Fourth of July talk so much that there are requests from all over the country for a small weekly chat. Now you won't refuse the people, will you?" I pleaded.

"No, I won't exactly refuse," he replied; "but, really, I'm awfully busy all the time. I thought I was busy in 1892, when the McKinley law was in such perfect order, but it didn't compare with what this Dingley law is doing. Why, I'm breaking the records all along the line. Just look at this total of foreign bills of sale—\$1,500,000,000. There ain't another country on earth that can show such a total."

"But," I remarked, "there seems to be a falling off in exports of manufactures."

"Don't you worry about that a minute," he replied. "The falling off is in figures, not in fact. For instance, I sold nearly \$20,000,000 of goods, mostly manufactures, to Porto Rico and Hawaii in 1900. Well, I've sold them considerable more this year, and yet not a dollar's worth appears in the reports. Then the war in China has cut off enough to make up the rest of the difference between this year and last. And besides all that, there has been a reduction in prices; so, really, exports of manufactures have increased."

"But that ain't the whole point, either. I've sold fully \$2,000,000,000 worth more of manufactures at home this last year; so don't worry, my boy, about an apparent loss of a few millions in foreign sales."

"Does the surplus please you?" I asked.

"It's great, isn't it? Kept right up to the mark and the estimates. And now I have reduced taxation by \$40,000,000 a year, and my friend John Bull is taxing his people right and left and wondering how he is going to foot the bills. I reckon he looks at my \$240,000,000 of customs receipts a little enviously; but he is too stubborn to change his fiscal policy, though I expect to see him putting up the bars before long."

"Then look at this treasury balance, \$175,000,000, besides the \$150,000,000 reserve fund. I'm buying bonds all the time, too. Quite different from what my last manager, Cleveland, did when he ran me into debt to the tune of about \$262,000,000, to say nothing of the interest on the bonds he sold. I tell you the people did me a mighty good turn when they gave me McKinley for a manager and a Republican Protection Congress to back him up."

The old gentleman rubbed his hands gleefully and seemed as jubilant as a boy in swimming.

"You have not said anything about the big balance of trade," I remarked. "Don't need to; it speaks for itself," tersely responded the happy man. "But," he added, "I'm prouder of those figures than I can tell you. It isn't so much the six hundred and thirty odd millions to my credit, but it shows that the people are expanding at home as well as abroad. We are buying more home-made goods and getting more and more independent of the rest of the world every year. We can afford to buy a few hundred millions' worth of luxuries abroad, but I want my people to buy all they can at home, and I guess they all see the point."

And the old gentleman gave me a merry wink as he went off with his pockets crammed to overflowing with coupons. F. C.

TARIFF AND RECIPROcity.

Second Declaration by the Ohio Republican Convention.

The declaration of the Ohio Republicans in their State convention on the subject of the tariff and reciprocity has evidently had a good effect in checking the nonsensical agitation in favor of tariff revision. It is well understood that the Ohio Republicans represent in their declaration the convictions of the President on this subject. Hence, when they declared that the tariff schedules to protect American labor against the low wages paid foreign labor "must be maintained," they made it entirely clear that the President does not want any tariff revision.

Mr. Hanna put the matter effectively when he declared that the party "will not permit an abridgement of the tariff that will interfere with the labor of one man for one day." There could be no revision, in the sense that word is generally used, without throwing thousands of men out of work, owing to the uncertainty that would be created as to what might be the final outcome.

On the subject of reciprocity the platform declares in favor of it, only stipulating that it must be "purely a reciprocity, not for the sake of encouraging any nation in closer commercial relations, with a profit on one side." Reciprocity, in the sense the word is used in the Republican national platform, which is the guide to the party, means the admission into this country at low rates of duty, or without any duty, of products that we do not produce in this country in return for sim-

ilar favors from the nation with which the treaty is negotiated. It does not mean cutting down the tariff to a dangerous extent on any industry established in this country by the protective tariff, which course might throw many men out of employment, to help some other industry.

There is nothing inconsistent, as the Ohio platform shows, between the protective tariff and reciprocity. For that reason the Republican party is in favor of reciprocity, and we have no doubt that Congress at its next session will assist the President in carrying into effect, to as large an extent as possible, his ideas on that subject. Those people who affect to believe that the President has changed his ideas to any extent on the tariff question need only to read carefully the platform adopted by the Ohio Republicans.—Philadelphia Press.

RADICAL TREATMENT REQUIRED.



Uncle Sam: "Those bugs are getting thick again. Guess I'd better clean 'em out once for all."

Wool Prices.

"The price of Indiana wool is just what it was in July 1897, the price having fallen from 29½ cents in January, 1900, to 20½ cents in May of the present year. The same movement is shown in all wools."—Indianapolis News.

Exactly so. The price of Indiana wool is just where it was in July, 1897, when the enactment of the Dingley Tariff raved the farmers of Indiana from the legislation so loved by the Indianapolis News. Incidentally it may be remarked that the price, 29½ cents, received for Indiana wool in 1889, is the highest on record.

The price secured for Indiana wool by the tariff advocated by Mr. Bryan and the News in the happy summer of 1896 was 14½ cents. As South American quarter-blood, shrinking less than Indiana, can now be landed in bond at 10 cents a pound, the adoption of the tariff policy of the News would mean that Indiana wool would be selling for just half the price it brings in Boston to-day.

Prices on wool are low as compared with 1900, thanks to the drop in wool all over the world, but, thank God, they are not at the ruinous level that would exist if the Dingley tariff were not in force with wool abroad breaking all records for cheapness, nor have they even dropped in the United States to the low level secured for American wool in 1896 by the Indianapolis News and its allies.—Boston Commercial Bulletin.

In Behalf of Business.

Speaking for the business interests of the entire country in deprecation of any and all attempts to reopen the tariff question, the New York Commercial wisely says:

"It would be extremely unfortunate to precipitate a national agitation that would call a halt on the country's business just at a time when popular feeling over the outlook is most hopeful and confident. But if there really exist two wings in the Republican party—one demanding a lowering of duties or their repeal in some instances, and the other determined to stand by the policy that has built up American industry, and, incidentally, the party—why, the sooner the thing is fought out to a finish the better, perhaps. But no American business man wants to see the next session of Congress given over to an acrimonious debate that would imperil the passage of needed legislation that the business of the country is crying for—on the isthmian canal, for instance."

If there is one thing more than another which business does not want it is tariff tinkering.

No Longer Hate the Octopus.

If Bryan wants to know how much "more power the trusts have in the Democratic party today than in 1896," he may take a run down to Texas and make a thorough inspection of the Standard Oil Company's late acquisitions there both of statesmen and real estate. Only a year ago the Texas legislature bucked and gagged the octopus and stored him in a barb wire cage.—Little Rock (Ark.) Republican.

Railroad Work and Wages.

Five years ago many of the railroads of the country were in the hands of receivers. Today every railroad of the country is traffic taxed to its utmost resources. There will be nearly 10,000 miles of track laid this year, against 1,600 in 1895, and the railroad employes will get \$100,000,000 more wages than during the Gorman-Wilson tariff.

HE'S NOW A WHEAT KING.

Berk Who Bought Kansas Farm Land and Is a Millionaire.

The wheat rentals of John T. Stewart of Sumner county will amount to nearly 100,000 bushels of wheat this year, says the Kansas City World. In his home county he owns 115 quarter sections of land and about thirty quarter sections in adjoining counties. He rents the land on the basis of half the yield, he furnishing all the seed and taking chances of securing a crop. It is estimated that if all the wheat due him on rentals this year was shipped in one consignment it would require seventeen freight trains of fifteen cars each to take it to market. His rentals in wheat last year netted him \$45,000. In addition to owning about \$350,000 worth of land, every foot of it paid for he has nearly \$250,000 worth of bank stock and \$300,000 invested in farm lands in Sumner county and Oklahoma. About twenty-five years ago Mr. Stewart began life as a clerk in an obscure office in this city at \$60 a month. He slept in the office and was economical in other ways. He began loaning money in Sumner county about twenty years ago and has developed into a remarkable financier. It is said that his ambition is to finally own a railroad and he may gratify it, as he is still a very young man, not more than 45. He carries a small memorandum book in his pocket and it is said that he can take it out at any hour of the day when required and tell every debtor exactly what his account is. Indeed, it is said that accounts of his vast transactions are always kept in a book that fits his trousers pocket. It is said that he lives on less than \$100 per month and that outside of this his largest annual expense is \$500 to the Methodist church his wife and large family of children attend. He is not fond of traveling except to go to a Democratic convention, a diversion he is passionately fond of. He is a pronounced temperance man, and it is said, believes in the prohibition laws of Kansas.

A BRAHMIN WEDDING.

Elaborate Ceremonies That Spread Over a Week.

Oriental marriage ceremonies are the most elaborate, and those of a Brahmin wedding, spread over the greater part of a week, are probably the most complicated. All the Hindoo gods are invited, and on the first day the pair sit under an alcove or canopy, with their faces turned to the east, while married women wave lighted camphor to avert the evil eye. On the second day the bridegroom appears eager to make a pilgrimage to Benares to wash in the sacred waters of the Ganges. His future father-in-law, after much entreaty, persuades the would-be pilgrim to give up the idea, and the priests profess readiness to accept the will for the deed, at the same time accepting a gift of 14 flags, by which the bridegroom symbolizes his purity of freedom from sin. A thread is then tied on the man's right wrist and the woman's left to show that they are united for life. The father-in-law now feigns to behold in the bridegroom the great god Vishnu himself, and makes an offering to him. Then water is poured over the two, and the "tali," a jewel set in gold, is tied on the bride's neck, while sandal paste, perfumes and flowers are offered to the guests. Fire is then brought in and, while a sacrifice is offered to Agni, the couple walk hand in hand seven times around it, and so make the "seven steps"—a symbol of everlasting friendship. The next day the astrologer points out the star Arundhati to impress upon the pair the duty of faithfulness. Then they eat together and, having sprinkled each other with rice, a final bridal procession takes place at night, when friends and relatives again avert the evil eye by the ceremony of Arati, or waving a lamp over the heads of the newly wed.—Utica Globe.

Athlete Tied to a Desk.

Albert Payson Terhune might be described as an athlete tied to a desk. He was a fence, boxer, weight-thrower and sprinter in college; crossed the Syrian desert on horseback, afterward living among the Bedouin tribes and preparing material for his book, "Syria from the Saddle." "On my return to America," he writes, "I got a job as reporter, working my way up, mainly through luck, to the post of subeditor and special writer. Mr. Terhune once proposed to box three rounds apiece with the six foremost heavy-weight prizefighters in the world (Jeffries, Corbett, Sharkey, McCoy, Ruhlin and Fitzsimmons), and write up his experiences with them in a series of articles for his newspaper. The articles made a hit. He is also a contributor of humorous articles to various periodicals. His latest literary venture was a novel written in collaboration with his mother, Marian Harland Terhune.

A Question of Bills.

A traveler in England rested at noon at a wayside inn, and took luncheon. The landlord was a social person, and after presenting his bill sat down and chatted with his guest. "By the way," the latter said, after a while, "what is your name?" "My name," replied the landlord, "is Partridge." "Ah," returned the traveler, with a humorous twinkle in his eyes, "by the length of your bill I should have thought it was Woodcock!" This story, as it appears in a recent book by a distinguished English diplomat, is credited with having amused Bismarck.

No man is strong who is unable to conquer himself.