

The Scourge of Damascus

A Story of the East...

By SYLVANUS COBB, JR.

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CHAPTER XI. Horum is Caged.

Carefully the three men emerged from the dungeon; and when Osmir had closed and bolted the door behind them, Selim went on ahead with the lantern. They were armed with good stout swords, and the blacks wore daggers in their sashes.

"In what direction must we pass out?" asked Julian, as they came to the end of the first vaulted passage.

"We must pass up where a guard is always kept," answered Osmir; "and our only hope is that we may be able to fall upon the sentinels, and overcome them, without creating disturbance enough for a general alarm."

"Whatever can be accomplished by strength of arm, we will accomplish," said the robber; "and I think we can be shrewd enough not to strike until we see that the blow shall fall surely."

"You can depend upon us," added Osmir, stopping while Selim opened a door. "We have already placed our lives in jeopardy, and only a successful exit from the palace can now save us. But, as I told you before, there is danger in the way."

"You have counted the chances?" "Yes."

"And are you ready to hide the result?" "Yes."

"Then let us meet the worst. If you, to set me free, are ready for the risk, I should be much more so."

At this juncture Selim, who had opened a door, and gone on a few steps in advance, came hurriedly back, with a look of alarm in his face.

"I hear footsteps in the passage overhead," he said, in a whisper. "Are you sure?"

"Yes. I heard them very plainly."

"What is the passage of which you speak?" asked Julian.

"It is one through which we must pass," replied Osmir, "and one in which we had expected to find no obstacle."

"It may be," suggested Selim, "that a new guard has been set there."

"That cannot be," asserted Osmir. "I came through there only a short time since, and the place was empty. Hark—I hear the steps from here—and I think they are coming this way. Hold a moment. Remain where you are, and I will find what this means."

Thus speaking, Osmir glided away into the darkness, towards the point where the stairs led down from the upper passage. After an absence of a few minutes he returned, and his first exclamation told that he was excited.

"The king is coming!"

"The king!" repeated Julian, in a quick, deep whisper.

"Yes—and two of his guards are with him. Some one else came as far as the head of the stairs with them, but I think only the king and the guards are descending."

"He must be coming to see me," said Julian.

"It must be so," answered Osmir; "for there is nothing else here for him to see, save our damp walls and toads."

"Hark! Here they come. I hear their voices, and can see where the rays of their lantern breaks in the gloom." It was Selim who said this, and as he spoke he drew back, and hid his own lantern beneath the skirt of his tunic.

Our adventurers, from where they stood, could see the foot of the steps at the far end of the passage; and presently they saw two men descend, the foremost one bearing a lantern, and wearing the robes of the king, while the other seemed to be an officer of the household.

"I see now," said Osmir, as he gained a view of the approaching men. "I was mistaken. The guards have been left behind, and this is Benoni, one of the captains of the guard, who comes with the king."

The robber chieftain was for a moment undecided as to the course he should pursue. Once his sword was half drawn from its scabbard; but Osmir, who heard the movement, seemed to have a better idea.

"My master," he whispered, touching Julian upon the arm, "let us draw back out of sight, and allow them to pass. They will certainly keep on to the dungeon we have left, and we will follow them thither."

"You are right," replied the chieftain. "They will be completely in our power when they have passed us."

Just back of where our trio stood was the door by which they had last passed, and upon one side was a deep niche in the wall, which had evidently been constructed for the reception of rubbish. Into this they quickly glided, Selim effectually cloaking his lantern that not a ray of light escaped. In a little while the king came near to the hiding place, with his lantern held carefully before him, and his head bowed, as though he was fearful that he might make a misstep. He walked slowly, and his frame shook with a perceptible tremor. When he reached the door he stopped, and turned towards his companions.

"Benoni," he said, "I think you may remain here. This is the last passage, and I will go the rest of the way alone."

"I had better accompany you to the end, sire."

"No—I prefer to go alone."

"But," urged the captain, "the way is rough and dubious, and you may miss your step."

"Out upon thee for an ass!" cried the king, indignantly. "Do you think my step is growing feeble? I tell thee it was never stronger. I will go the rest of the way as I have said. I shall find Selim at the door of the dungeon, and he will render me such assistance as I may need there. I must see this prisoner alone. He possesses a secret which I must fathom before he loses his head."

"I beg thee, sire, be careful."

"Peace, good Benoni. Don't fret on my account. I know what I do. I'll find out the story of this robber's life, and then his head shall come off right quickly. Stay you here, and await my return."

Thus speaking, the king moved on, and when the sound of his uncertain, stumbling footfall could be no longer heard, Julian reached forth until his hand touched one of his companions.

"Who is this?" he asked, in a hushed whisper. It was Selim.

"There is no time to lose. The captain must be disposed of quickly. Uncover your lantern, and I will throttle him."

Selim did as directed, and as soon as the rays of light fell upon the captain, the latter started to gaze about him. But his free-will movements were quickly terminated by a blow from the first of the robber chieftain, which felled him to the floor, and before he could move or cry out, he was securely bound, and Osmir's sash passed over his mouth.

"Now," cried Julian, "for the king. He will be an easy subject to dispose of."

"And how will you dispose of him?" asked Osmir.

For an instant a dark thought struggled through Julian's mind. Here was an opportunity to put his worst enemy out of the way, and, at the same time, free the world from a ruler who had ceased to do justly. But the thought was not long entertained. The soul of the chieftain was above the doing of such a deed. Osmir noticed the hesitation, and tremblingly asked:

"Will you kill him?"

"No, no," was the quick reply. "That would be too cowardly. He is a poor foolish old man, whose continued life must be the greatest curse. We will put him where he put me, and let his slaves find him after we are gone. Come—I will lead to this event, and then you shall lead to the next."

Without further remark the robber moved on towards the dungeon where he had been confined, Selim going by his side with the lantern. Pretty soon they saw the king ahead of them, whereupon Selim was suffered to go on in advance. Horam had reached the door of the dungeon just as Selim came up.

"Ha, Selim, is this you?"

"Yes, sire."

"I did not see you when I came. Where have you been hiding?"

"I have not been hiding, sire; but have been doing my duty."

"And the prisoner?"

"He is safe."

"Open the door. I would speak with him. He is securely chained?"

"No mortal man can break the chains wherewith he was bound, sire."

"Then open—quick. His arms are bound?"

"Like iron, sire."

"And he cannot move from his place?"

"The chains all center upon the bolt in the floor."

"Then you may remain without, Selim. I wish to speak with the prisoner alone."

Selim had no particular understanding with his companions touching this movement; but he understood that Julian would act when he saw fit, so he proceeded to unbolt the door and throw it open.

"We can shut him in and leave him," whispered Osmir, when he saw the king about to pass into the dungeon.

"No, no," quickly returned Julian. "I have another thought. I may find use for those royal robes which he wears."

"By the gods!" cried Osmir, "the prize is worth ten thousand times more than I had thought. If you don those regal robes, Selim and I can lead you in safety from this place. By the blessed star, it is a lucky thought. Ha! He goes in. Shall I accompany you?"

"You may remain close at hand."

CHAPTER XII. A Royal Disguise.

Until the present time Julian had thought of overcoming the king without a word—of felling him to the pavement and binding him, and leaving him in ignorance of who had done it; but a different fancy seized him as he saw the monarch enter the dungeon. The temptation to face his deadly enemy, and let him know to what he owed his disgrace, was too strong to be resisted. The thought that he could now place his foot upon the neck of the king of Damascus, and grant the poor life which he had the power to take, was not to be passed by. And then the robber chieftain had another reason for wishing to speak with the king, since the opportunity had thus unexpectedly offered itself. Horam had come on purpose to see him,

to learn some secret. Our hero had a curiosity to know what this meant. "Stay a moment where you are," he said, addressing the blacks; and thus speaking he passed into the dungeon just as the king had discovered that no prisoner was there.

"Ho! Selim!" shouted the monarch, turning his face to the door. "What is the matter here? Is not this the—?" He stopped, for the light of his lantern, falling upon the face of the man who had followed him in, revealed another face than that of Selim.

"Horam," spoke the chieftain, "you find the Scourge of Damascus not quite as powerless as you had expected."

"What ho! Selim! Selim!" "Easy, old man. Selim will not come at your bidding. Let me inform you that I am master, for the present, of this lower region, and Selim is my slave."

"Mercy!" gasped the terrified king. "What ho! Benoni! Benoni!"

"Benoni is in my power," said Julian. "He is bound hand and foot, and cannot help you. And, thou base, false man—thou, too, art in my power. Down in this deep dungeon, where the light of day cannot come, and where the noise of the upper world cannot penetrate, here I have thee as thou didst hope to have me. Horam, I am thy master!"

The king's knees smote together, and the lantern dropped from his hand.

"Mercy!" he cried. And then, as though remembering that he was king of Damascus, he clenched his hands, and tried to speak with the voice of authority.

"Vile miscreant," he said, "let me pass! If you dare to oppose me, you shall be torn limb from limb!"

"Easy, old man. I am your master now, and if you give me occasion, I may do you harm."

There was that in the look, tone and bearing of the stalwart chieftain which caused Horam to quail. The lantern had fallen in an upright position, and its light revealed quite plainly the features of the two men.

"You will not kill me?" whispered the king.

"No," replied Julian. "I should scorn the deed; and I should despise myself if I did it. I wish simply to do this. I must leave this palace tonight, and you must remain here in my place. Some of your slaves will find you in the morning. You must strip off that purple robe, and that golden chain; and I must have the jeweled crown from your head. Come—I have no time to waste."

"Ye gods of heaven!" ejaculated Horam. "how can this thing be! Who ever heard of such a thing! Who dares to disrobe the king?"

"I dare to do it!" replied the robber, sternly and quickly, at the same time taking a step forward. "Remove the garments instantly, or I shall tear them from you."

"No, no; you dare not rob your king!"

"Peace, poor fool! Hesitate another minute, and I will smite you to the floor! Off with the robe!"

The trembling monarch cast one look into the face of the man before him, and then shrank back against the wall. He was as a mere child, and for the time, while unable to do evil, he seemed an object of pity.

"If I give you these things will you spare my life?"

"I told you once—yes. And once more I beg you to remember that my time is short. You will save yourself some trouble if you obey me."

This was spoken very slowly, each word dropping from the robber's lips with the weight of a death sentence; and the lowering of the brow, the swelling of the broad bosom, and the nervous working of the hands, told too plainly that the edict must be obeyed.

HOME MADE HONEY.

A Restaurant Man Captures a Stray Swarm of Bees.

Ralph Gushee, the lessee of the Park Department restaurant overlooking the Hudson at the upper end of Riverside drive, tells a remarkable story of how he obtained the honey which is one of the "specials" on his daily menu.

"Two weeks ago," said Mr. Gushee to Corporation Counsel Whalen, who was the host of a party of politicians at Claremont, "I noticed a swarm of bees under the tree down there overhanging the drive just where the carriages stand at the dinner hour. I offered \$10 to anybody who would remove them and nobody wanted to take the offer until one of the policemen detailed to guard Grant's tomb heard of it. He said he knew all about bees and I told him to go ahead. He went down in the basement and got an empty sugar barrel. Then he demanded a sheet and borrowed a pair of buckskin gloves from a gardener. He spread the sheet on the drive under the tree and set the barrel, from which he had removed a couple of staves, on its side. Then he climbed the tree and gently shook the bees down to the sheet, whence he gathered them up into the barrel. This was covered with the same sort of mosquito netting with which he had enveloped his own head and taken back of the hotel. There must have been three or four quarts of bees, and they settled into their new home as naturally as though they had come to Riverside Park for that purpose. They began to hive at once, and for the last two weeks I've been getting four or five pounds of honey right along and the bees are still at home and at work."

Mr. Whalen remarked laughingly that as the bees were evidently taking sweetness from the blossoms in the park it would be in order for the city to increase Mr. Gushee's rent. It is supposed that the bees came across the Hudson River from New Jersey.

REMARKABLE SHOWING.

HOW WE COMPARE WITH THE REST OF THE WORLD.

In Wealth, Production and Consumption the United States, with 5 Per Cent of the Population, Equals Half of the Remainder of Mankind.

A comparison of the United States with the rest of the world as regards annual production, consumption, population, wealth and many other items relating to the question of comparative prosperity, shows some remarkable facts. With less than 5 per cent of the population and only 7 per cent of the area, yet in many ways we equal or surpass all the rest of the world combined, and taken as a whole, we are equal to one-half of all the remainder of mankind besides ourselves. We equal or surpass all the rest of the world in corn, cotton, eggs, petroleum, leather products, copper, forest and products. We produce two-thirds as much as the rest of the world in coal, pig iron, steel; three-fifths of the total food and agricultural products and manufactures; one-half as much in silver, iron ore, fish; one-fifth as much

in gold, wheat, oats, hay, butter and cheese; one-fourth as much in hops and beer; one-fifth to one-tenth as much in barley and wool.

Reckoned in value, we consume twice as much corn as all the rest of the world, one-half as much wheat, one-third as much oats, one-third as much cotton, one-fifth as much wool, one-third as much sugar, one-half as much fish, nearly as much coffee, one-fourth as much tea, and about three-fifths as much meat. We have one-third as much wealth, one-third as much gold, one-fifth as much silver, one-tenth as much sheep, one-third as many cows, two-thirds of the railroad mileage, twice as much life insurance, one-half as much savings bank deposits, one-fourth of the revenue and expenditures and less than one-thirtieth of the world's debts.

We are today practically independent of the rest of the earth. In a few years we shall raise our own sugar, silk, all fibers, tea, coffee, wines, and, in fact, everything used by mankind.

The conclusion then, is warranted that in another generation if the present system of Protection is continued, the people of the United States and Territories will equal or surpass in production, consumption and wealth, the peoples of the rest of the world combined.

Comparison of Present Status, Annual Production, Consumption, etc., Between United States and Rest of World.

Figures are approximate. Where possible, official; otherwise, from most reliable authorities, dating January 1, 1901, or last fiscal or calendar year. Where last annual figures are abnormal an average is taken of recent years.

Status and commodity.	World.	United States.	Rest of world.	Per cent—United States of World.
Population	1,600,000,000	77,000,000	1,523,000,000	4.8
Area	52,000,000	3,900,000	48,100,000	7.5
Wealth	\$400,000,000,000	100,000,000,000	300,000,000,000	25
Gold production	\$20,000,000	\$6,000,000	\$14,000,000	30
Stock of gold	\$4,811,000,000	\$1,029,200,000	\$3,781,800,000	21
Silver production	\$100,000,000	\$33,000,000	\$67,000,000	33
Stock of silver	\$3,820,000,000	\$620,000,000	\$3,200,000,000	16
Paper money	\$2,000,000,000	\$1,000,000,000	\$1,000,000,000	50
Corn production	2,800,000,000 bu.	(b)2,100,000,000	700,000,000	75
Corn consumption	1,900,000,000	1,000,000,000	900,000,000	52
Wheat production	2,500,000,000 bu.	(b)1,620,000,000	880,000,000	65
Wheat consumption	1,800,000,000	1,000,000,000	800,000,000	55
Oats production	3,100,000,000 bu.	(b)1,900,000,000	1,200,000,000	61
Oats consumption	2,300,000,000	1,200,000,000	1,100,000,000	52
Rye production	1,200,000,000 bu.	770,000,000	430,000,000	64
Rye consumption	700,000,000	350,000,000	350,000,000	50
Barley production	1,200,000,000 bu.	700,000,000	500,000,000	58
Barley consumption	800,000,000	400,000,000	400,000,000	50
Hay production	250,000,000 tons	150,000,000	100,000,000	60
Potato production	4,000,000,000 bu.	210,000,000	3,790,000,000	5
Hops production	2,000,000 tons	200,000	1,800,000	10
Butter and cheese	2,000,000 tons	700,000	1,300,000	35
Eggs	20,000,000,000	10,000,000,000	10,000,000,000	50
Cotton production	13,500,000 bales	(b)10,500,000	3,000,000	78
Cotton consumption	10,000,000	5,000,000	5,000,000	50
Wool production	2,700,000,000 lbs.	300,000,000	2,400,000,000	11
Wool consumption	450,000,000	225,000,000	225,000,000	50
Spindles in operation	105,000,000	21,000,000	84,000,000	20
Number of sheep	84,000,000	21,000,000	63,000,000	25
Number of milch cows	62,000,000	16,000,000	46,000,000	26
Sugar production	8,500,000 tons	210,000	8,290,000	2.5
Sugar consumption	1,500,000,000 lbs.	750,000,000	1,210,000,000	46
Coffee consumption	450,000,000 lbs.	85,000,000	365,000,000	19
Food production	250,000,000 tons	150,000,000	100,000,000	43
Food consumption	1,500,000,000 tons	225,000,000	1,275,000,000	15
Agricultural products	\$15,000,000,000	7,000,000,000	8,000,000,000	44
Meat products	20,000,000 tons	10,000,000	10,000,000	50
Leather and products	\$600,000,000	\$300,000,000	\$300,000,000	50
Fish products	\$2,500,000,000	\$2,500,000,000	\$2,500,000,000	100
Forest area	1,336,000,000 acres	700,000,000	636,000,000	52
Forest products	\$3,000,000,000	1,500,000,000	1,500,000,000	50
Beer production	\$6,500,000,000	1,221,000,000	5,279,000,000	19
Wine production	\$3,000,000,000	26,500,000	2,973,500,000	0.9
Petroleum products	\$5,000,000,000	2,500,000,000	2,500,000,000	50
Coal production	750,000,000 tons	300,000,000	450,000,000	40
Copper production	\$200,000,000	\$60,000,000	\$140,000,000	30
Iron ore	\$60,000,000	\$30,000,000	\$30,000,000	50
Pig iron	40,000,000 tons	15,000,000	25,000,000	37.5
Steel	27,000,000 tons	11,000,000	16,000,000	40
Manpower	\$40,000,000,000	\$25,000,000,000	\$15,000,000,000	62.5
Railroad mileage	475,000 miles	(c)185,000	290,000	40
Spent for public education	\$500,000,000	\$200,000,000	\$300,000,000	40
Life insurance	\$18,000,000,000	\$6,000,000,000	\$12,000,000,000	33
Savings bank deposits	\$7,000,000,000	\$2,500,000,000	\$4,500,000,000	36
Shipping tonnage	\$6,000,000,000	(d)1,500,000,000	\$4,500,000,000	25
Revenue	\$5,000,000,000	\$900,000,000	\$4,100,000,000	18
Expenditures	\$5,000,000,000	\$900,000,000	\$4,100,000,000	18
Exports	\$7,750,000,000	\$1,500,000,000	\$6,250,000,000	20
Imports	\$9,000,000,000	\$500,000,000	\$8,500,000,000	9
Debt	\$33,000,000,000	\$1,500,000,000	\$31,500,000,000	4.5

(a) Commercial value, netting value somewhat more than double these amounts.

(b) Average recent years.

(c) Total track, 200,000 miles.

(d) More than four-fifths engaged in lake and coast trade.

COMMON SENSE.

Every Producing Country Cuts Prices on Its Surplus Goods When Exported.

Referring to the circular issued by The American Protective Tariff League, urging a general response to the inquiry of the industrial commission relative to domestic and export prices of American-made goods, a well informed correspondent writes:

Your circular No. 171 is acknowledged. I am not a manufacturer, but have purchased and shipped goods to a Mexican railroad. It was then the universal practice to give a discount on goods shipped to that country.

This practice, I believe, is common in all countries, and some of the British railroads are, I am told, by their charters forced to give lower freight rates on goods for export. Sir Bernard Samuelson, M. P., F. R. S., in his report on "Railway Goods Tariffs," December 22, 1885, gives these British rates among others:

Export Domestic.	Export Foreign.
Manchester to London... 21.	36.
Manchester to Liverpool... 6.10	10.6

Export Domestic.	Export Foreign.
Leeds to Hull... 12.6	25.
Leeds to Newcastle... 11.6	14.2

A like discrimination seems to be made in Belgium.

It seems to me the Industrial Commission should extend their inquiry, unless