

The Scourge of Damascus

A Story of the East...

By SYLVANUS COBB, JR.

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CHAPTER XXII—(Continued).

Julian stood like one thunderstruck. He raised his manacled hands to his brow, and tried to realize the force of the wonderful thing he had heard.

Horam started to his feet, and then sank back, and buried his face in his hands. His thoughts had suddenly flown from the story of the present hour to that other story which he had had heard on the night before; and the crash almost took away his senses.

Omar, when he saw how matters stood, felt called upon to speak; for he believed that he had discovered two things: First, that his old friend and brother was struggling to open his breast to his child; and, second, that Julian might be brought to forgiveness when he knew the whole truth.

"My friends," he said, rising to his feet as he spoke, "the story is not yet complete. It remains for me to finish it."

Ben Hadad and Ezebel gazed eagerly up into his face; and Julian leaned toward him, with a beam of hope struggling upon his brow.

"I am to blame in this matter; or, at least, I was the innocent cause," continued the King of Aleppo, addressing Ben Hadad and Ezebel. "It was I who gave to Horam the evidence upon which he condemned his wife. I supposed the guilt of the lady Helena was positive, as I had the information from officers who would not lie; and I felt it my duty to acquaint the husband with the circumstances. On my way back to my capital, while stopping in Balbec, I gained information which assured me that the Queen of Damascus was innocent; and immediately I sent back two of my officers to convey intelligence thereof to Horam. But those messengers never reached their destination. They must have been robbed and murdered on the way. I pursued my course homeward, and amid the duties of my realm, the thing passed from my mind. Yesterday I saw Horam for the first time in three-and-twenty years; and last evening I revealed to him the fact that his first and best beloved wife, Helena, was wrongfully accused—that she was pure and true. When this truth burst upon him, his grief overcame him, and I feared that the shock would kill him."

"Aye," cried Horam, starting up again, "it did almost kill me; for Helena was my first love, and her place was never refilled. O, my brother what can I do?"

"Do what is right," replied Omar, taking Horam's outstretched hand. "Be a man, and let the heart assert its sway. Remember that you did the first great deed of wrong; and that all the other evil has flowed out from that one unfortunate act."

The king of Damascus stood for a moment with his head bowed upon Omar's shoulder, and his hand still in Omar's grasp. Then he started up, and his countenance had changed.

"By the blood of my heart," he exclaimed, "the wrong shall not grow deeper against me! What, ho! Without, there! Slaves!—attend me!"

The executioners chanced to be nearest, and they answered the call.

"Bel-Dara, strike those irons from that man's limbs! Strike off every bond, and set him free! If you harm him as much as the prick of a rose-thorn, your life shall answer for it!"

The executioner stopped to ask no questions—he did not even stop to wonder at the order; but he proceeded to the work, and in a very few minutes the prisoner was free.

Then the king started down from the throne, and advanced to where the freed man stood.

"My son," he said, extending both his hands, "the truth has come so naked and so plain, that there is no room for doubt; and I now see that you bear upon your face the features of your noble mother—God pardon me for the wrong I was led to do here! And, my son,—here, in the presence of these witnesses, I ask you to forget the past—I ask you to be my son—I ask you to let me be your father;—and then, O, then, Horam will be no more childless!"

Julian had no power to resist the appeal; and as the old king tottered forward the son supported him upon his bosom, and sustained him in the embrace of his stout arms.

And yet Julian was not content. His face wore still a cloud; and there was trouble in his heart.

What could it mean? Horam feared that his son could not quite love him. Omar saw the trouble, and divined its cause; and stepping quickly forward he whispered into the ear of his brother. Horam caught at the words, and the star of hope beamed again. He clasped his hands and cried out:

"What, ho! Without! Where is Benoni?"

The captain came.

"Benoni, bring the lady Ulin!"

Pale and trembling the princess entered the chamber; but when she saw Julian alive and free, with the shackles broken at his feet, the blood leaped again through her veins. But she had not much opportunity for thought, for the king quickly advanced and took her hand, and led her to Julian.

"My son, this do I give thee in token of my sincerity! Now wilt thou own me for thy father, and forget all of the past save that which tells that we are of one flesh? Take this fair hand, and with it my forgiveness to you both—my forgiveness to all who have befriended you. Take it, my son, and ere Omar leaves us for his northern

realm he shall see Horam's own son sitting upon the throne of Damascus, while Horam himself withdraws from the world, that his last days may be spent in quiet repose."

No longer rested the cloud upon Julian's brow. He caught the small white hand which had been placed within his grasp, and sank down upon his knees—sank down, he and Ulin, one in love forevermore—and bowed before the king.

"My father—I accept the blessing! I am thy son!"

THE END.

The Blind Bride.

By Amy Randolph.

Bentley Grange was a pretty place at all times of the year, but loveliest of all when the reapers were at work in the harvest fields and the yellow light of the October sun turned the woodland paths to enchanted aisles. A long, low structure of warmly tinted red brick, with mullioned windows, velvet-smooth sweeps of lawn and box borders, which stood up like walls of solid emerald on each side of the path, it had a savor of the antique about it, which one seldom sees in an American house.

And old Brande Bentley, walking up and down in the mellow sunshine, between the walls of black-green box, with his eyes bent on the ground, and his hands clasped behind his back, corresponded well with the Grange.

Suddenly a cheerful footstep rang on the stone terrace steps—the sound of a clear, flute-like whistle rose above the click of the distant mowing machine, and Harry Wade, the old man's nephew, stood like an incarnation of youth and sunshine before him.

"Uncle," he cried merrily, "you've got the prettiest place in the world here."

Mr. Bentley took out his big, old-fashioned silver watch.

"Two o'clock," said he, "and the bank don't close until four. Humph! It appears to me, young man, that you don't stick very close to business hours!"

"Like a limpet, uncle," said Harry, "and just for today. Will Caryl has come to act as a substitute, for I really wanted to see you, uncle."

"Humph!" again commented Mr. Bentley. "You're very fond of me—just of late!"

"I'm always fond of you, Uncle Brande," said Harry, gravely, "but I've something to tell you."

"Some scrape you've got into," said Mr. Bentley.

"Nothing of the sort, sir!"

"Want to borrow money, perhaps?"

"Upon my word, no!"

"You've fallen in love with some girl, then?"

"You are right this time, uncle," said Harry, laughing and coloring; "and, of course, I have come directly to you to tell you of my good fortune. It is little Bessie Bird!"

"A milliner's apprentice!" snarled the old bachelor.

"If she chooses to help her mother along by trimming hats in her aunt's millinery rooms, I see nothing derogatory in that," said Harry, valiantly.

"A mere child of seventeen!"

"But I don't want an old lady of forty-seven!"

"Humph!" growled Mr. Bentley. "What do either of you know of life?"

"Not much, to be sure, uncle, as yet," admitted the young lover, "but we think we can easily learn—together."

"And where do you think the napkins and tablecloths and bread and butter and rent and water taxes are to come from?" sardonically inquired Brande Bentley.

"I have my salary, Uncle Brande," said Harry, "and Bessie has been educated to be very economical."

"I'll have nothing to say to such nonsense," said Mr. Bentley.

"But, Uncle Brande, all we want is—"

"Nothing, I say—absolutely nothing!" thundered the old man. "It's folly—trash—sentimental tomfoolery! If you want my opinion, there it is! Time enough for you to think of matrimony when you are thirty. There ought to be a law to prevent young people making fools of themselves."

And Brande Bentley turned on his heel and strode back into the house.

So that Harry had no very inspiring news for Bessie Bird when he met her, as usual, on the corner of Broadway, to walk home with her through the pleasant autumn twilight.

"Was he very cross?" said Bessie, who was a white-kitten sort of a girl, with fluffy yellow hair, dimples in her cheeks, and eyes the exact color of the "flowing-blue" china on our grandmother's shelves.

"As savage as Bluebeard!"

"Did he scold dreadfully?" asked Bessie.

"Told me I was a fool!"

"But if he won't consent—"

"Then we must manage to get along without his consent," said Harry. "Because, you know, Bessie, I do love you so very dearly, and you like me a little, don't you?"

"But your mother has always counted upon your being his heir," said Bessie. "And to lose all that money, just—"

"Just for love and you," archly interrupted Harry. "Darling, there is

nothing in all the world half so sweet to me, or that I court half so ardently as my little Bessie—so let there be no further argument about it. These jolly old crows down at the bank are going to raise my salary fifty dollars at Christmas, and so if you can get your frock made we'll be married then. And set Uncle Brande and the world at defiance, eh?"

The first November snowstorm was drifting its white flashes through the air when a visitor was shown into Brande Bentley's snug parlor.

"Eh," said he, "a stranger, Jones? I never see strangers."

"But you will see me!" said a soft voice—and a slender, golden-haired girl stood before him, neatly yet plainly dressed, her black cloak powdered over with snow, and a spectacles old lady by her side. "I am Bessie Bird—and this is my aunt, Miss Belton, the milliner."

Miss Belton courtesied. Mr. Bentley stared.

"I suppose you have come here to speak to me about my nephew."

"Yes, sir," said Bessie.

"It will be of no use," said he, curtly. "My opinions on the subject of his marriage remain unchanged."

"But mine do not," said Bessie.

"Please to hear me through, Mr. Bentley. I have written him a letter to give him up this morning. And I came to tell of it now, so that you will feel kindly towards him once more. I have told him we never could be married."

"You're a sensible girl," said Mr. Bentley, smiting his hand on the table.

"And I have sent him back the little garnet engagement ring that he gave me," added Bessie, with a sob in her throat.

"Better and better!" said Uncle Brande, exultantly.

"Not," bravely added Bessie, "because I don't love him as dearly and truly as I ever did. But because I see now how wrong it would be for me to fetter his whole life. For—"

She stopped an instant and a slight shudder ran through her frame. "I may as well tell you all, Mr. Bentley; I am going blind!"

"Blind!" echoed the old man.

"Blind," repeated Bessie, gently, but firmly. "I have had such strange blurs and darkens come across my vision of late, and went to a doctor. And the doctor told me, as kindly as he could, that these are but the precursors of total blindness. So, of course, all is at an end between Harry and me. Will you please tell him this? I have referred him to you for all particulars."

"I will," said the old man, huskily.

Harry Wade came to his uncle that very morning in great perturbation.

"What does this mean, sir?" said he. "Have you been endeavoring to persuade me to throw me over?"

"No, boy—no," said the old man, and he told him all.

"I am bound to say that the girl has behaved very well," said he. "Shall you give her up?"

"No! Never!" shouted Harry, with pale face and tightly clenched hand. "Never! If she was dear to me before, she shall be doubly treasured and sacred now—my little smitten lamb—my drooping, white lily-bud! I will never give her up while we both live!"

The old man's eyes glittered, a faint color had risen into his withered cheeks, as he rose and grasped both his nephew's hands as in a vise.

"You're a trump, Harry Wade!" said he. "I respect you more at this minute than ever before. Give her up, indeed! If you gave up that little jewel of a girl you would give up the beacon star of your existence. She is a pearl of price, Harry—a true and noble woman, who wouldn't have hesitated to sacrifice herself for your benefit. Marry her tomorrow if you will and bring her right here to Bentley Grange. It shall be her home and yours henceforward."

And in this strange and sudden way, old Brande Bentley relented and took his niece-in-law—elect into his heart. Bessie in all the flush of her rose-bud beauty could never have melted his heart, but Bessie stricken down by God became sacred and precious in his sight.

NEW ENGLAND CONSCIENCE.

The Scruple That Prevented a Young Widow's Remarriage.

Said a drummer visitor (Miss M. E. Boyd) to a young widow—a seamstress—in a New Hampshire hill town, one day last summer: "You must be lonely here now since your husband died. Perhaps you will feel like marrying again; you are not so very old."

"Oh, Miss Mary," she answered in a voice full of feeling, "if I only could—if I only dared!" And then came the simple story and a touching example of "the New England conscience."

She had loved in early youth a young man whom her mother disapproved as a suitor. He was a joiner by trade and worthy, but the mother, having higher ambitions, separated the couple. The girl married a quiet man, her senior, who died a few years later.

Then, after a decent interval, the old lover, who had thriven in business, asked her again to become his wife. That seemed a beautiful and natural ending of the story. But no. "Ah!" cried the poor thing, "if I had loved my husband I could go to James with a happy heart—oh, how happy! But although things were pleasant enough between my husband and me, I always felt the difference and at heart I was unfaithful to him. I think this is meant for my punishment for thinking of James while I had a husband living. We can never marry."—Buffalo Commercial.

In the huge mass of evil, as it rolls along and swells, there is ever some good working imprisoned; working towards deliverance and triumph.—Carlyle.

FOLLY OF FUSIONISTS

Their Attack on Gov. Dietrich for His Exercise of the Veto.

GUARDING THE STATE'S FINANCES

Nebraska Now Enjoying a Strictly Business Administration—Gross Mismanagement of State Institutions Under Demo-Popocratic Rule.

The fusionists were so reckless in their expenditures of the public funds during their incumbency that even the popocratic editors, in a moment of absent-mindedness, forgot their lines in economics and advocated the outlay of money and additional tax burdens upon the people without any thought of the justice or consequences thereof. An illustration of this is found in the attack on Governor Dietrich for his veto of the \$90,500 appropriation for sundry purposes in connection with the university. The popocratic editors have the boldness to state that the veto of this large sum was inspired by hostility to this well known educational institution. A more irrational deduction could not be drawn nor a more silly falsehood uttered. In vetoing this appropriation, as shown by the public records, Governor Dietrich simply saw that if this amount was allowed to stand the total appropriation would exceed the proceeds from the one-mill levy and result in a corresponding increase in the floating indebtedness.

Whether designedly or not the items were all included in one sum total, so that Governor Dietrich was required either to veto or approve the section in its entirety, it being impossible to eliminate any particular or individual item. Before passing upon it he summoned Chancellor Andrews, who in the Board of Regents, and requested that the appropriation be some over and such items as would least interfere with the least successful management of the school be pointed out. Both Secretary Dale and Chancellor Andrews admitted that the section appropriating \$90,500 was of less utility and could be vetoed and cause less interference with plans than any other portion of the bill. More than this, Secretary Dale in the presence of Chancellor Andrews, after looking over the section then to be and afterwards vetoed, admitted that of the \$90,500 there really was but \$16,000 of it for repairs and improvements really needed. In other words, that the university could get along all right and be in no way incumbent through lack of funds if the improvements requiring an appropriation of \$16,000 were provided for. On this showing Governor Dietrich, believing that it was better business methods to use the state's credit to the extent of \$16,000 than to add an additional tax burden upon the people of \$90,500, which also meant a corresponding increase in the floating indebtedness of the state, vetoed that section. The result is that the university is apparently getting along just as well as if it had the money and the taxpayers of Nebraska have been saved a large sum of money.

In regard to the statement that has been made by one of the popocratic editors that this was done in order that the state treasurer might have more funds to invest for his own profit, it is sufficient to say that this dense ignorance of the finances of the university is exploded by the fact that there are and for several years have been warrants outstanding against these funds. At present there are approximately \$55,000 university warrants outstanding, and this coupled with the fact that the prevailing rate of expenses exceeds the one-mill levy, thoroughly explodes the charge that the state treasurer would or could in any way benefit by such a veto.

Another thing which prompted Governor Dietrich to veto the \$90,500 appropriation was that the fusion administration had not alone squandered all the money in the treasury, but had run the state in debt, and left unpaid bills amounting to more than \$150,000. The reckless extravagance of the Poynter administration enjoined the strictest economy upon the republicans in order to avoid an increase in the warrant indebtedness of the state of sufficient proportions to impair its credit.

Governor Dietrich vacated the executive chair before he had much of an opportunity to install his policy of retrenchment, but his successor, Governor Savage, has maintained the strictest economy, with the result that for the first time in many years the state of Nebraska is enjoying a strictly business administration. The people of Nebraska are paying less for their administration of government and their public interests and institutions are being better cared for than for many years. Governor Savage has proven himself to be a man of keen judgment and splendid business ideas and his administration promises to be popular with the people on account of rugged honesty, strict economy and rare circumspection.

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dered a \$1,500.00 drug fund in ten months, and that, too, in the face of the fact that his predecessor, Dr. Sadler, turned over a large supply of drugs to him upon his retirement. Inquiry brought to light the fact that the state has paid for drugs never delivered. It is a significant fact that while more than 40 per cent of the drugs used at the home were, by reason of friction between the physician in charge and the inmates, purchased by the inmates out of their private funds, the expense of maintaining the drug department to the state increased more than three hundred per cent.

Other physicians were, for some reason or other, summoned to the home to perform services for which Dr. Swigart was paid by the state, and instead of their fees being deducted from Dr. Swigart's salary, the bills were presented to Dr. Swigart; he presented them to the drug firm which had the contract; the latter paid the money to Dr. Swigart, and sent in vouchers to the state for drugs. Positive proof is in existence that Dr. Swigart sold liquor that was bought and paid for by the state funds to inmates and appropriated the proceeds to his own use. The records will show that this institution consumed more liquor than nearly all of the other institutions of the state. It is openly charged that the attending physician indulged to excess in the use of intoxicating beverages, and that on more than one occasion he was incapacitated for duty by reason of inebriety.

The commandant, physician, adjutant and other officials at the home maintained their relatives there at the state's expense.

The public records show that Commandant Belzer drew upon numerous funds for his own benefit, and had all the printing for the institution done in the newspaper owned and managed by his son, and charged the state for nursery stock and ornamental trees from his own nursery. Excessive prices were charged and paid for both the printing and the trees.

There is a gross irregularity apparent at this institution in connection with the construction of a public building thereat. The contract was awarded to an irresponsible bidder, who failed to comply with its provisions, and the building was completed at the expense of the bondsmen. An architect was employed at the rate of \$5.00 per day and paid out of the regular appropriation fund to superintend the construction, when, as a matter of fact, he had practically no experience in this class of work. Very inferior material was used in the construction in this building, and in few respects were the plans and specifications complied with.

Hospital for Insane at Norfolk.

The very large quantity of coal consumed at the hospital for the insane at Norfolk has led to many sensational reports, though I know of nothing more than that the vouchers in the auditor's office show that a great deal of coal is required at this institution. There are other indications that there has been more or less juggling of contracts for supplies in the interests of friends at the institution and in the state house. Particularly is this true in the award of the contract for drugs. Favoritism has been exercised in the award of the drug contracts, and in the purchase of extras from the drug fund. Investigation reveals the fact that it is the custom at this institution, to misappropriate specifically appropriated funds.

During the recent administration, the mother and sister of the superintendent, and the four children of the steward were kept at the institution at the state's expense.

State Normal at Peru.

Until recently, if it is not true today, three rooms in one of the public buildings owned by the state in connection with the Normal school were occupied by a private fusion newspaper printing office. This concern paid no rent, and in addition paid nothing for its light, water and heat. It occupied these quarters for upward of two years, having a monopoly of the job printing of the institution, for which it charged excessive prices. There is evidence that at this institution radical and unwarranted changes have been made in the text books, evidently for no other purpose than profit, and to the great detriment and inconvenience of the student. It is due the present incumbent of the presidency to say that the reports of jugglery of text books originated during the administration of his predecessor.

Fish Hatchery at South Bend.

The Fish Hatchery at South Bend is in a deplorable condition. About eighteen months ago an Omaha saloon keeper named Sloup was appointed superintendent of the hatchery. He was utterly without experience, knew nothing as to the manner in which fish should be propagated, and the result is that for the many thousands of dollars expended by the state in the development of this industry, there is nothing left but evidences of ruin and desolation. It will require much money, time and care to restore this enterprise to its former condition.

Institute for the Blind at Nebraska City.

The taxpayers of the state have been grossly imposed upon at the Institute for the Blind. The superintendent, contrary to all precedent, refused to teach any of the branches upon the ground that he was incapacitated by reason of old age. At the close of the first semester last year, which is the last official report available, there were upwards of seventy-five inmates and fifty-one people on the pay roll.

The Newest in Life Saving Rafts.

The latest patent in life saving rafts, one just adopted by the United States navy, sees the