

# The Scourge of Damascus

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

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## CHAPTER III. Love in Danger.

A bright, beautiful morning, with a gentle breeze sweeping down the fragrance of flower and shrub from the mountain slope. Ulin had eaten her breakfast, and, with Albia by her side, sat upon an open window, gazing out upon the park of fountains. As she thus sat, the slave woman Calypso entered the apartment and announced that the robber wished to see the Lady Ulin.

"What robber?" asked the princess. "The same one that came yesterday."

Ulin did not stop to think whether the visit would be pleasant or otherwise. The man had signified his purpose, and as he was master in the palace, she had no idea of opposing him. Calypso withdrew, and presently afterwards the robber entered. He came in with the same noble step and bearing; the same pleasant, genial face; and with the same look and salute of reverence and respect.

"I trust that the Lady Ulin has passed a quiet night," he said, in deep sincerity.

"I have rested well, sir," she replied.

"Good. I am glad of that. I feared you might have had dreams."

"Not many, sir."

"Ah—and did you have any such?"

"Not—not many."

"You dreamt that Julian was a demon, eh?"

"No, no, sir—my dreams were not of him."

"I hope, sweet lady, that you dreamt not darkly of me."

"No, sir. It was of—"

The maiden hesitated, and seemed troubled; but her visitor came to her assistance.

"Never mind, lady. I meant not to inquire into the secret twinnings of your mind. I only hoped that I had not been unfortunate enough to excite the apprehension of your slumbering fancies."

He smiled as he spoke, at the same time moving a step nearer, and then adding:

"I am glad you have not suffered from our coming; for I have the more courage to ask you if you will see Julian."

"You said you would accompany him, sir."

"Yes."

"Then I may as well see him at once as another. You may inform him that the lady Ulin rests her safety and honor in his manhood."

"He has been so informed, fair lady."

"Then, let him come."

"Gentle lady, pardon me if I have led you upon a fanciful way of thought. I am Julian. I am he whom men call the Scourge of Damascus. And now I crave your indulgence; but still I shall bow most humbly to your commands. At your word I leave this apartment; yet, I should like to speak a little further. I should like to explain more fully why I am here."

Was Ulin frightened? Not at all. She was startled when she first knew that the man before her was the dreadful Scourge of whom she had heard so much; but it was an emotion of astonishment. At first she could hardly believe that she had heard the truth.

"You—Julian?" she murmured, gazing into his face.

"Aye, lady. And then he added, with a smile, 'I suppose you expected to find me black and ugly, like the foul gent whom Solomon imprisoned in the sea. Am I right?'"

"I did not think you were Julian," the maiden said, after some hesitation. As she spoke she seemed to gain new confidence and composure; and presently she added, "I had heard so much of your terrible deeds, that I expected to find a—"

"A monster," suggested Julian, helping her out.

"Not exactly that," returned Ulin, with a smile, "though I am free to confess that I should not have been so much surprised as I have been, if I had seen a worse looking man."

"Thank you," cried the robber laughing. "I shall take that as a compliment, and lay it up among the most precious of my recollections. I understand you; so, upon this point, I need only assure you that I am Julian, and that I must own the somewhat dubious title which has been bestowed upon me. And now, lady, may I sit here for a few moments, and speak with you further?"

The very thing Ulin had been upon the point of suggesting. She did not like to see him standing before her; nor was she anxious that he should leave her. She had a strong curiosity to hear him speak further. There was something in the appearance of the youthful adventurer that deeply interested her. She bade him be seated, and then, without intending to be heard, she murmured:

"So young?"

"Aye, lady," he said, catching the whispered words. "I am younger—perhaps, than I look. Only three-and-twenty years have cast the shadow upon me." At that age the youth of the city just breaking from the bonds of parental restraint, is as a child; but with me it has been different. A parent I never knew. A kind, generous woman, who was my nurse, took the place of a mother during my early childhood; and a white-haired

old man, who lived apart from the world, gave me my first lessons of life, and led me up till I could protect myself. A father's fostering care I never knew. A mother's love I never realized. The cruel blow which shattered the cup of my joys, killed my poor mother ere my tongue could hiss her name. As I grew to manhood I knew that I was an orphan, and that my misfortune was the work of the King of Damascus. O! how the iron settled into my soul. I had grown strong and resolute, as though heaven would enable me to work retribution upon the tyrant. Do you ask me if I enjoy the life I have led. I answer—I have made enjoyments for myself. I have felt a peculiar satisfaction in knowing that the king feared me. When I have heard my name spoken by the rich and powerful with fear and trembling, I have liked it; and when I have known that Horam dreaded my approach, I have felt that my labors were not without their result. But these have not been my joys. In Damascus the name of Julian is a terror; but there are other places where that name is spoken with love and gratitude. Upon the plains of Abilene, and in the mountain passes of Lebanon, where the busy craftsmen prepare timber for Jerusalem—there Julian is hailed as a friend and benefactor. The grim satisfaction of torturing the cruel King of Damascus is tempered and softened by the calmer atmosphere of these friendly regions."

Why did Ulin sit so still and listen with such rapt attention to the words of the speaker? She bent her head as though soft music were stealing o'er her senses; and she gazed upon the man before her as though a grand, inspiring picture had been unfolded to her vision. His words carried truth in their very sound, and all her sympathies had been aroused. She was a woman whose nature had not been warped by art; and the avenues to her soul were guarded only by the pure instincts of virtue and humanity. Not always the safest guard; but still the happiest when surrounding influences are not evil.

"And now, lady," pursued Julian, "I must tell you why I am here; and in doing this I speak only those words necessary to the truth. On my way from the plains I met a messenger, who informed me that a fair maiden had been shut up in the Palace of the Valley. I could not believe that a beautiful young virgin had willingly given herself to the desires of Horam. I thought she had been shut up thus against her own pleasure. With this belief I resolved to release her. The result you know. I have heard your story from the lips of the black slave who attends upon you, and she informs me that you are affianced to the king by your own consent, and without any desires on your part to the contrary. Is it so?"

"The slave told you truly, sir," replied Ulin, bowing her head, and speaking in a very low tone.

"And you came here to this place of your own free will?"

"Yes, sir. My period of mourning was not passed, and the king brought me hither that I might be more retired."

"And but for the death of your mother you would have been the king's wife ere this?"

Ulin replied in the affirmative; but her voice trembled, and she seemed to shudder at the thought thus presented.

"Lady," said Julian, showing some emotion, which he evidently did not mean to show, "for my seeming wrong I most humbly beg your pardon. I had thought to wrest from the grasp of the king one who was an unwilling captive; but since I find myself mistaken I will do all I can to make amends. A—"

"And," said the robber, rising to his feet, "it is better that I should leave you at once."

He stopped, and swept his hand across his brow, and when he resumed, his speech was very low, and his voice tremulous:

"This has been a most strange adventure; and as I now look upon it, it seems as though some mischievous sprite had planned it. As I live I thought when I came hither but such as I have told you of. I have met you, lady, and for the first time in my life I have felt my heart drawn warmly towards my native city. Henceforth there will be something in Damascus towards which my thoughts will turn with other sentiments than those of bitterness. Lady Ulin, we may never meet again. In this moment of our strange companionship, may I not take you by the hand?"

She could not have refused had she wished; but that she had no wish so to do was evident from the free and friendly manner in which she arose to meet him. She gave him her hand, and suffered him to raise it to his lips.

"Dear lady, should we never meet again, I trust that you will bear one kindly thought of Julian. If you are forced to think of the wrongs he has done, let a memory of the wrongs he has suffered be some extenuation. Bless you, lady! All good spirits guard and protect you; and peace be thine forevermore! Farewell!"

He turned and was gone. Ulin felt a warm spot upon her hand—a drop of moisture—a tear! She gazed upon it, and knew that it came not from her eye. It fell there with the Kiss. A

strange tribute from the Scourge of Damascus!

"Albia, I think I shall never see that man again; but I shall remember him with emotions far removed from fear or terror."

"You will remember him as little as possible, my mistress," said the slave girl, taking a seat close by Ulin's side, and resting her hand upon her arm.

"What mean you, Albia? Why should my memory be narrowed or shortened?"

"Because you are to have a husband who will demand your every thought and feeling. Horam is deeply versed in all the secrets of the female heart, and his eyes will not sleep while you have a thought which he does not understand."

"Indeed, Albia," cried the princess, with a look of amazement, "you misunderstand me."

"If such be the case," replied the girl, very quietly, "you will forgive me for what I have said; and of Julian we will think no more."

Albia—was it so? Had Ulin been misunderstood? Had the keen-eyed Albia been mistaken? Would there be no more thought of Julian?

The day passed away, and towards evening Aswad returned from the mountains. He said he had not fled from fear of the robbers; but that, when he saw that defeat was inevitable, he had sought safety from capture so that he might communicate with Damascus. Perhaps he told the truth. At all events, he resumed his command, and once more posted his guards about the valley; and then came to assure the princess that she was safe.

It was in the evening, just as the last gleams of day were fading out, and before the lamps had been lighted—at that season when the thoughts are most apt to wander and strange fancies visit the mind.

It was not to be that Ulin should spend the allotted time at the Palace of the Valley. The king had heard of the attack of Julian, and he came with a large army to bear the princess away from a place which was no longer safe. He was somewhat surprised when he found that the Scourge of Damascus had been within the palace, and had withdrawn again; and when he had heard the story from Calypso, he ordered one half the palace guardsmen to be executed within the valley.

The maiden had heard from Calypso of the bloody deed which had been done by the king's order, and when she knew that he was coming, she declared her intention of refusing to see him. But Albia persuaded her to a different course.

"As you value your future welfare," pleaded the bondmaid, "so must you behave before the king. If you would live in peace, let him have no occasion to mistrust your real feelings. He is coming. Beware!"

The warning was most seasonable; and Ulin, by obeying it so conducted herself that Horam thought she only suffered from the dreadful fright occasioned by the appearance of the terrible Julian. He spoke to her words of cheer and assurance, and announced his purpose of carrying her back to Damascus.

"We will rest tonight, sweet love," he said, "and on the morrow you shall find a safer shelter."

Ulin gazed upon the wrinkled face, and upon the quaking limbs, and upon the sparse gray hairs; and she could not repress a shudder. She looked upon the thin, hard hands of the monarch, and they seemed covered with blood. She watched him as he departed with her father; and when he had gone she sank down, and leaned her head upon Albia's bosom.

"O," she murmured, "I fear that I have undertaken more than I can accomplish. I cannot be that man's wife! I never knew him until now. He will kill me!"

"Peace!" whispered the bondmaid. But she whispered in vain.

(To be Continued.)

### ECENTRIC WILLS.

Benjamin Franklin Left a Small Sum Which is Now Available.

When Benjamin Franklin died, in 1790, he left a small sum of money, which was not to be used until the twentieth century. His gift is at last available, and the sum now amounts to \$375,000, having been invested at compound interest, says the Pittsburg Press. The trustees of the Franklin fund have decided to use the money for the erection of a Franklin institute in Franklin square, Boston. Curious provisions made by will are more common than one would suppose. Within the last few months, there have been several examples of eccentric disposals of property. To one young woman has been left \$25,000 by her brother under the express condition that she neither marries nor becomes a nun. If the conditions are not fulfilled, the money is to be distributed among other relatives. To his three daughters an Italian who recently died left \$300 a year each if they remained single and \$2,500 each a year if they married. A late member of the English parliament left by will to his two daughters \$720,000, with the provision that the money is only to be payable if they attain the age of 35 years, without marrying either a citizen of the United States or a Hebrew.

A new claimant for the fortune left by the composer Verdi has appeared. He is a farmer named Verdi, living near Athens, Greece. He says that the Verdi family came originally from the east, one branch establishing itself at Athens, and the other going on to Italy, and that he is the closest surviving relative of the deceased composer.

# The G. A. R. at CLEVELAND



The national encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic, at Cleveland, will undoubtedly mark the climax in gatherings of the bronzed, aged and battle-scarred veterans of the civil war. It brings together scores of old soldiers, many of whom will not be on hand for another encampment. Those who have outlived the awful vicissitudes of their campaigns, however, and have enjoyed the calm of industrial and business life since their campaigns closed, will be there in surprising numbers. Those whose means or opportunities do not permit them to attend the gathering of their comrades will be there in spirit and sympathy.

Depleted numbers, the advanced age and accumulating infirmities of those who survive, the disappearances of

perfecting a veterans' organization. The first post was formed at Decatur, Ill., on the evening of April 6, 1865, and this, with two posts established at Springfield, adopted the principles which have been the cardinal doctrines of the organization. Ever since the first national convention in 1866—the annual gatherings were not officially styled "encampments" until the following year—the Grand Army has played an important role in the history of the nation. It has done much for the relief of its own members. It has done much for charity, and it should not be forgotten that in several instances this charity—notably during the times of the Mississippi valley yellow fever outbreaks and the Charlestown earthquake—was directed to the relief of former enemies. But most of all it has been a beneficial factor in keeping alive the sentiments of loyalty and patriotism.

Such an organization is without parallel among the societies of war

readers of history fully comprehend the magnitude of the civil war, the wonderful courage it revealed and the intensity of the feeling which gave thousands of men year after year to the battlefield. The veterans alone are able to appreciate just what patient courage and endurance were necessary to live through the years of the rebellion. Considering the nature of that experience it is not surprising that the bond among the veterans should be strong. Their reunions commemorate events which loom large in the world's history. It is the memory

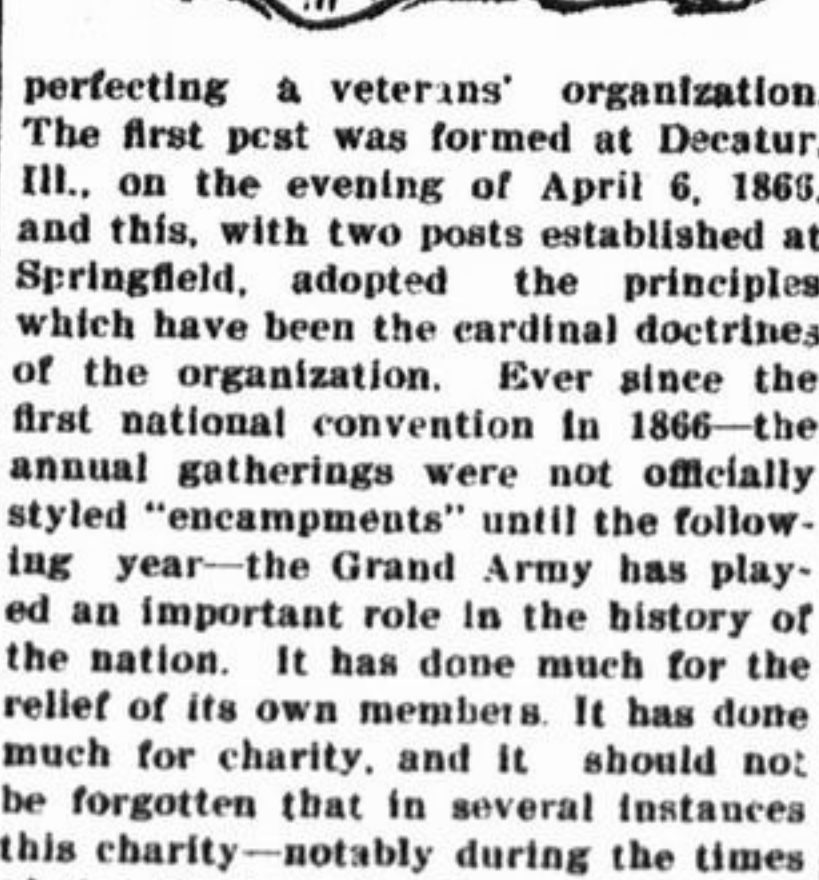


PERRY STATUE.

posts by the death of members, will end in the not distant future the history of the grand army—an organization that has had a career that stamps it as unique in itself, without reference to the exceptional nature of the great events from which it took its rise. Held together entirely by community of sentiment and a spirit of mutual helpfulness, its existence has been a perpetual reminder of the strength of the bonds and the intensity of the patriotic spirit which united the men engaged in the war.

First G. A. R. Post.

The Grand Army of the Republic has had a life of about thirty-five years. The war was over and the reunited nation was just beginning to take up the work of peace when the first post was formed. The origin of the order is traced to a meeting of veterans at Springfield, Ill., during the winter of 1865-66, when Dr. F. B. Stephenson who was a surgeon in the Fourteenth Illinois Infantry, took the initiative in



SOLDIER MONUMENT.

of these things, and in the reflection that the Grand Army must dwindle with saddening rapidity, that the people take pleasure in doing honor to the old soldiers.

A Splendid Selection. Cleveland has been making ample



CENTRAL ARMORY, CLEVELAND.

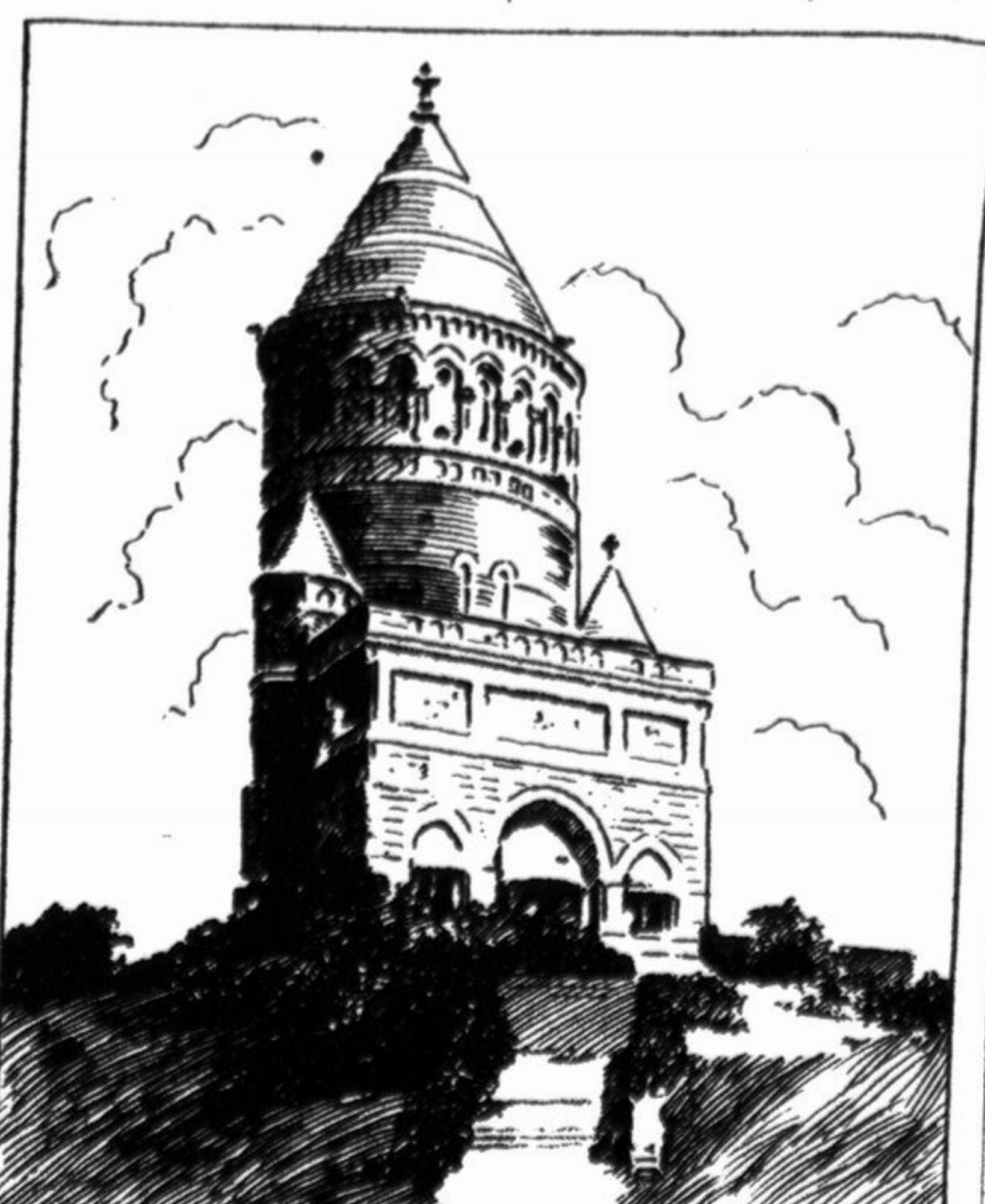
veterans the world over. It has no predecessor and it cannot have a successor. It sprung from conditions which are not likely to repeat themselves in any country or at any time. It is doubtful if many of the casual



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THE GARFIELD MONUMENT.

Notes of the G. A. R. Encampment. The only national W. R. C. home in America is located at Madison, thirty-five miles east of Cleveland. The national meeting of the W. R. C. has never before been held within 150 miles of this institution inhabited by heroines of the civil war, and many members of the W. R. C. who go to Cleveland will no doubt avail themselves of the opportunity to visit the home. Special trains will be run for the convenience of visitors to the institution.

preparations for the entertainment of the old soldiers, and as they arrive they will find the latch-string out and the glad hand of welcome extended. More than 200,000 visitors are expected to be in the encampment city during the week, and it is the aim of the citizens of Cleveland to make it a red-letter event in the history of the town. Free quarters have been provided for from 25,000 to 30,000 veterans in school houses and halls, similar to the plan adopted by Chicago, and which worked so successfully last year.

The Forest City is a place of armories and monuments, and has many points of historic interest. Foremost among these is the tomb of the late President Garfield, whose home was in Mentor, only twenty-four miles from Cleveland. The mausoleum is located in Lake View cemetery, on a high piece of ground, and is the Mecca of many visitors to the city. The statue of Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry, the hero of the battle of Lake Erie in the war of 1812, was dedicated September 10, 1860, the anniversary of Perry's great victory. Some years ago it was removed from the public square, where it had been originally placed, and taken to a beautiful spot in Wade park, where it now stands.

In the very heart of the business section of the city stands one of the grandest soldiers' monuments in the United States. Within its walls are relics of wars and the names of departed heroes chiseled in the marble surroundings. This monument will no doubt be one of the greatest attractions at the encampment and will doubtless be visited by every veteran in attendance.

Located but two blocks from the public square is the Central armory, a large and magnificent building, where campfires by the veterans will be held. It will also be a principal headquarters for the Grand Army.

Among the many reunions in connection with the encampment will be those of the Michigan Cavalry brigade, First Vermont and Twenty-fifth New York Cavalry regiments and the Fifth New York Heavy Artillery. The president of the Michigan Cavalry Brigade is Gen. James H. Kidd, of Iowa. Another reunion will be that of the first brigade, third division, twentieth army corps, at one time commanded by Benjamin Harrison, afterwards elected president.