The Scourge of Damascus

COBB, JR.

CHAPTER VI.

It was near noon, and the king of Damascus was in his chamber with About Cassem. They were talking about the approaching marriage.

"In three days more," said Horam, "I shall claim her for my bride."

"In truth, sire, it is as you have said," replied the minister. He spoke not with the enthusiasm of appreciation, but as one who would not dispute his king. "I trust, sire, your hopes may find their fruition. I pray that Ulin may bear to thee a son, and thus make bright and promising the evening of your life."

"Good Aboul, I trust in thy words. Ha! what now? Whom have we

here?" Judah is without, and would speak of the council, and I have not time to with thee."

Judah whom I sent from the Valley of look?" Lycanius?"

"The same, sire."

"Then send him to me at once. By my life, Aboul, he cannot have accomplished his mission so sown. dare not hope so."

ed the minister; and before further deep lustrous eyes, and the gentle curlremark could be made Judah stood ing of that sunny hair?" in the royal presence.

"Ha, Judah-do I see thee back so soon? Have you come to bring me

word of failure?" "Nay, sire," replied the Israelite, "I have come to bring the robber chieftain to Damascus."

"Have you taken him?"

"Yes, sire." "Alive!"

"Yes, sire."

"And have him here?"

"Ready to be brought before you at may time." "He is bound?"

"Yes, sire."

"Then bring him at once. By the sigh escaped her. host of Pluto, I would see the fellow. But-hold. He is guarded?"

"Yes, sire. Osmir and Selim are with him."

"Are they all?"

"It needs no more. The prisoner is securely bound, and can offer no realstance." "Then let him come." "Ye gods!" uttered Horam, turning

to his minister, after Judah had gone, "what manner of man shall we behold?" "I cannot guess, sire." .

"A giant, I think-as ugly as a Cybound."

In a little while the door opened, and Judah entered, followed by Osmir and Selim, who led a bound man between them.

the prisoner."

"But where is Julian?" demanded

Horam. "This is Julian."

face of the bound man before him. "This?' he repeated, in a lower tone, advancing another step, and gazing more earnestly upon the bold, open, youthful face. "This is not Julian."

"This is he who hath commanded the robber band," said Judah.

"Aye and I am he whom you have called the Scourge of Damascus," spoke the prisoner, standing proudly erect, and gazing full into the face of the king. "I am Julian, the enemy of Horam, and the avenger of wrongs done years ago."

The monarch, as he gazed more intently upon those features, and as the tones of that voice fell upon his ear, seemed startled by the memory of some old dream. And Aboul Cassem was not entirely uninterested. The old minister gazed as fixedly and as earnestly upon the face of the young chieftain as did his royal master; and he, too, seemed puzzled and perplexed.

"Who are you?" asked Horam. "I am Julian, the Scourge."

"But what else?"

"You should know what else, most mighty king. I have tried to make myself felt by you."

"But," urged Horam, taking no notice of the robber's tone, "why have you sought to harm me? Who are you that can have cause for such enmity?"

of deepest wrong," replied Julian, "Fatheriess and motherless came I from the feeble steps of childhood; and know that Horam was the murderer of my parents."

"Ha!" cried the king, with a start. "Who were your parents?"

"I will not speak their names in your

"Beware, robber! I may compel you to answer." "If you have power to extract an-

awers from dead men, you may force wers from me." "By the gods, thou art insolent."

Then bind my tongue, as these slaves have bound my arms." "No," said Horam, struggling with

his passion. "I have another plan. alive into a den of wild beasts. It The secret which you will not speak to me you shall never speak. You shall your parents with all possible

w the deepest, darkest dun

A Story of the East... SYLVANUS

Copyrighted 1801 by Robert Bonner's Sons. "Yes, sire." him into the very bowels of the deep-

> est cavern, where the doors are of iron, and the bolts of triple steel, and see that he is kept safely there until the more." morrow. You will answer for him with your life."

"Once more the king gazed into that youthful face, and then turned away to a window.

prisoner had been conducted away, king." "why do you spare that man for even another hour? Why do you not execute him at once?"

"Because," replied Horam, starting up, "I have a curiosity to know who he is. There is some mystery in that "Sire, "spoke a page, "the Israelite, face of his. It is now near the hour think. I must see him again. Did you "How!" cried the king. "Is it the not mark something peculiar in his

> "Yes, sire: there is something in his face which is familiar to me; or, at least, it seems so."

"By my life, Aboul, it must be so. ther?" Did you mark that bold front; that open brow; that Jove-like sweep of "Let us hope for the best," suggest- | nose and chin? and did you mark the

"Yes, sire."

"And can you not read its secret?"

"Not yet-not yet, Aboul; but I must I have a strange curiosity; and it is a curiosity which has been strangely and suddenly excited."

"No. Can your majesty?"

CHAPTER VII.

At Hassem's House.

Ulin had lost none of her wondrous beauty; but she had become pale, and the healthy flash of the eye was gone. Late in the evening she sat in her chamber, with her brow resting upon ber hand, and ever and anon a deep

"My dear, good mistress," spoke Albia, gliding to the side of the princess, and resting her hand affectionately upon her arm, "I cannot bear to see you suffer so. What is it?"

without raising her head, and her to man. Your mother gave him money voice was low and mad.

tendant. She got down upon her knees, aid, it should be freely given. I know and gazed earnestly up into Ulin's face. | that he will befriend you. If you wish ble and unhappy. Why will you not last of my strength and my life I will pour out your sorrows to me? Perhaps | help and sustain you. Think of it, my I can help you bear them. You know | mistress."

if there is help to be had. As I live at | and we both need rest." this moment, so, if it should appear to me necessary, would I lay down my life "Sire," spoke the Israelite, "this is for your welfare. Will you not trust

"Ulin leaned her head forward upon Albia's shoulder, and burst into tears.

"Oh, Albia, you are my friend-you "This?" cried the monarch, taking are my sister. I know you love me; a step forward, and gazing into the and I cannot tell you how grateful I

"They why will you not lift the veil from your sorrow, and allow me to feel still more for you?"

"I had almost resolved to tell you Albia."

"Then make the resolution sure, and admit me to your fullest confidence. The princess dried her eyes, and finally lifted her head from her companion's shoulder.

"Dear Albia, I know not how to commence. I am a child-a poor, foolish child-as you will say when I have told you all. You will say that I deserve to suffer, and that punishment

should be mine." "Nay, my lady," responded the bondmaiden; "you must not commence in that way. Tell me first all the cause of your sorrow; and leave it for me to base my own judgment. Come-trust me, and let me give you all my sym-

pathy." A few moments the princess was silent, and then she said, with a low

tremor in her voice: "Dear Albia, when I said that would marry with the king I did not think what I was doing. That strange dream, so wonderfully repeated, led my father to broach the subject, and did not refuse. When he talked of my being queen, and of my giving "I am one who knows the bitterness | birth to a king to a king of Damascus, I thought it might be my duty to offer myself. I did not then know Horam. But-now-I have learned new things. I dread the fate which I have courted. I fear and loathe the man whose wife I have promised to become. When first promised to give myself to Horam I felt that I could perform the duty without the sacrifice of any real virtue or comfort of life. But, oh, how changed it has all become. Not only does my whole nature shrink from the

> makes you shudder, Albia," "Oh, how terrible!"

is horrible! Dear Albia, I know not

what to do." "Have you told me all?" whispered the bondmaiden, winding her arm about her mistress' neck, and kissing her upon the brow.

"Have I not told you enough?" returned Ulin, covering her face with her hands.

"Not if there is more to tell, dear lady. You have trusted me this fartrust me with all. You have told me that you dread the king; and I do not "Conduct this man thither. Plunge | wonder at this. You cannot have forgotten that I spoke against the union from the first. It seemed to me unnatural. But, lady, there is something

"Nothing more which I dare to tell Albia. Nay-do not ask me. I have told you all that I can tell. And now I ask you-what can I do? The fatal hour is nigh at hand in the which "Sire," spoke the minister, after the have promised to give myself to the

"There is one thing you can do, my mistress-one thing alone, which I can

"Speak, Albia."

"You can flee." "Flee!" repeated Ulin, in a startled

"There is but one other course open to you.' "And that---"

"Marriage with the king."

"Oh, Albia, this is dreadful! Tha same thought of flight has entered my mind before; but can I leave my fa-

"If you become the king's wife, you must leave him. Think of it, lady." "But whither can I flee?"

"I have thought of that,' said the bondmaiden, "and I think I know where you could find safety. Some miles from Damascus, among the hills where the Pharphar winds its water in a mummuring channel, lives an old hermit, named Ben Hadad. His home is in a cave which the hand of nature has fashioned in the solid rock; and his life is given to deeds of charity and good will. I have seen him, and l know that he is good and kind."

"And how came you to know this old man?" asked the princess, with some surprise.

"I know him through an old woman named Ezabel, who has been often in the city, and who was well acquainted with your mother. This Ezabel used to come often to our house, and once Ben Hadad came with her-a whitehaired old man, whose just and temperate life is lengthening out far be-"It is nothing, Albia." Ulin spoke youd the span of years usually allotted to be expended in charity; and he told "Don't tell me that," urged the at- her, if she ever could find use for his "Oh, my dear lady, you are misera- to fiee, I will go with you, and to the

lop. But he is bound. Aboul-he is I love you; you know that I will be "I will think of it, Albia, and on faithful. Tell me all, and I will suffer the morrow my mind shall be made with you if I can; and I will help you up. You may retire now. It it late,

(To be continued.)

Good Rasagh for Him-

Two brothers recently visited the offices of a firm of American machine agents in Loudon. One was at the head of an important English manufacturing firm, the second was an engineer who had lived in Pennsylvania for some years. The latter pointed out to his brother machine after machine that he ought to have. "You know, Tom," he at last declared emphatically, "if I were in your place I'd throw every bit of your old machinery on the scrap heap and have an up-todate plant right through. You'd double your output and halve your expenses." "Tom" listened carefully and put his hand to his chin in reflective fashion "Well, Dick," he said at length, "you may be right. I won't say that you're not. But why should I change? The old machines were good enough for father, and they were good enough for grandfather, so I am thinking they're good enough for me."

Conturies of Imprisonment. To be sentenced to imprisonment for the term of one's natural life is hard enough, but to be consigned to a dungeon cell for a couple of thousands years is indeed harrowing. Yet foreign judges not infrequently impose sentences of several centuries without it being considered anything remarkable. Not long ago an Italian adventurer was convicted of 63 distinct forgeries. He was sentenced in each case, with the result that he will be free in the year 2089. A couple of years ago a young man was arrested in Vienna, who, upon his own showing, should have been sentenced to 2,500 years' imprisonment. A total of 400 charges was brought against him, and he was convicted and sentenced on all of them. But the judge was a merciful man and in passing sentence he threw off 1,000 years in consideration of the man's

Flower of England.

The flower of England is the rose sacrifice, but it seems as though a fate | and this choice dates back to the Wars worse than death were involved in the of the Roses, when that branch of the ordeal. Last night I dreamed that Ho- royal family known as the house of ram was my husband, and that he Lancaster chose a red rose for its meant to kill me. He did not plan to | badge, and the rival branch, the house drown me, as he did poor Helena; but of York, had a white rose. Previous he declared that I should be thrown to that date the badge of the English royal family, the Plantagenets, was a apriz of broom, from which indeed they took their surname, as the tound-"And yet, my dear girl, I dreamed er of the family-Fulke Martel, the that I felt a relief when I knew that | earl of Anjou, having explated a crime death was coming, even though it was by a pilgrimage to Palestine, and beto come so dreadfully. Just think what | ing scourged there with broom-twigh a state of mind that must be. Oh, it ever afterward.

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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 bafore, 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, unsupported 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.

can be avoided. Are you ready to

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

"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 bondmaiden 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 ber 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 bondmaiden, 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

sanger 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 thing. It would not be proper. most 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.

is here." stout, middle-aged man. As the rays more weak than you imagine. I am men commit suicide.

"You will come with him, Albia;

and you will remain with me while he

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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 Lycanius. 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 busi-

"Noble lady," he said, in a tone which might at once have banished allfear 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 'But," said the bondmaiden, "there my care during his opening youth; is but one way in which the sacrifice and when he reached the estate of manhood I was content to serve him. "Not yet-not yet, Albia. Wait 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.

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 citycast 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?"

is the king's slave." "And two black men, named Osmir and Selim?"

"I know him well," said Aibia, "He

"I know them also," answered the bondmalden. "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."

"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 lleutenant "some of us think that others higher

than Julian owe more to justice than "Still, sir." pursued Ulin, "It is most absurd to think that I could help you

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 Polypses drew when he ravaged the city of the northern plain. To save all this, nochieftain's prison-house?"

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 bondmaiden went away, and ere the keys of the prison door, I would

more like a prisoner than like a prin-

cess!" At this juncture the bondmaiden arose from her seat and moved forward. Her dark eyes sparkled with peculiar fire, and her fair brow worked as though the bain 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.

bia. "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. 1 will look for it if my lady is willing."

"I cannot tell you now," replied Al-

"And I am pardoned for my intruslon?" 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 I love him as a brother—aye, better | 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 bondmaides

> returned. The door was closed, and Albia re-

marked, as she took a seat: "He will be in the garden two hours "Lady," pursued the lieutenant, who past midnight, my lady; and if we had stopped a moment, as though he 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

would serve him, I think a way can be opened to the accomplishment." The princess reflected a few mo-

Albia, in a thoughtful mood. "If you

ments, 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 bondmaiden, 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 "But sir, said Ulin, struggling to certainly have been the case if the speak calmly, "what can this mean to 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 cir-

cumstance?" "He had almost been killed by some staves of Aleppo," explained Albia,

(To be continued.)

Even Family Secreta! 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 parcela 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 tho same time it must be confessed that there is a great difficulty in getting people to give truthful declarations.

More Laughter, Less Saielde. The physiological benefits of laugh-

ter can not be overestimated. It shakes up the diaphragm, sets the pulses beating to a lively measure, stimulates the blood corpuscles, enble princess, can you not help me? Is livens the brain, and sometimes prothere not some way in which you can duces dislocation of the jaw when inremove the bolt from the door of the dulged in too heartly by a man with a large mouth. Used with discretion Ulin was trembling more violently laughter is as inspiring as a sea breeze, as refreshing as an August shower. Its moral effect is beyond computation. It has killed more ridleulous superstitions by its rollicking roars of unbelief than any other agency, says the Literary Era, What can be more derisive than a laught The man who laughs never kills himlong returned, followed by a tall, set your master free; but, alas! I am self. That is the reason so few Irish-