

The Scourge of Damascus

A Story of the East...

By SYLVANUS COBB, JR.

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CHAPTER IX.—(Continued).

"I remember," pursued Ulla, "it all comes to me now. I bathed his bruised head, and bound up his wounds, while you brought the cordial which my mother provided."

"So it was, my lady. I have seen the slave since—have seen him several times—he has brought messages to your father—and I know that his gratitude is strong. If Osmir has any power to open the prison door, and I can find him, there may be some hope."

"But can you find him?" asked the princess. She spoke eagerly, and no longer sought to conceal the real cause of her anxiety.

"I can try," returned the attendant; "and even here we have a fortunate help. Shubal, who has been so long your servant, is a near friend to Osmir. I will take Shubal with me, and we may find the man we seek. Shall I not leave at once?"

"Yes, Albia. Go at once. Be careful, for all may depend on the secrecy of your movements. I have entered upon this matter, and I will now give all my energies to its consummation. Go—and bring me answer as quickly as you can."

The bondmaid left the apartment, and when Ulla was once more alone, she started to her feet, and moved to the window. The flush was back upon her cheek, and the sparkle was in her eye. Her pure blood was circulating with new power, as, for the time, she forgot the king in the memory of the youthful chieftain.

In less than an hour Albia returned, and the beam upon her face told very plainly that she had not been entirely disappointed.

"My good mistress," she said, "Shubal has served us well. I found him without difficulty, and he at once went alone in search of Osmir. He found him at the royal palace, and has brought him hither."

"Brought Osmir?"

"Yes."

"And what does he say?"

"I have not spoken to him of Julian. I thought you had better do that. You may have more influence."

"Very well—bring him up at once. I will shrink from nothing now."

"In a little while the tall, dark form glided within the chamber of the princess. He bowed low as he entered, and when he saw the lady Ulla, he sank down upon his knees."

"Noble lady," he said, "Albia informed me that I can be of service to you. Once you served me, and my life has been yours ever since. Command me."

At first Ulla had been startled by the appearance of the powerful black within her chamber; but when she remembered the service she had done him, and when she saw how gently the beams of gratitude fell upon her from his brown eyes, she regained her confidence.

"I will not command you, Osmir; I can only ask you to assist me. You may be able to serve me, and you may not be able. But I will not detain you with useless words. You do not yet know what I seek?"

"I do not, lady."

"You helped to bring the robber chieftain to Damascus."

"He—who told you that?" He was not startled with fear; but he rather seemed to wonder how the princess had gained the information.

"Do you know a man named Hobaddan?"

"Yes, lady. He is second in command of the robber band."

"He has been here, Osmir, and he has induced me to use my influence towards gaining freedom for his chieftain. I may not explain to you, but nevertheless I am willing to confess that I do much desire to free this Julian from the power of the king. Can you help me?"

He bowed his head, and pretty soon arose to his feet.

"Lady," he said, "I did help in the capture of the young chieftain; but when I came to know him I would rather have served him had it been in my power. I found him a generous, honorable man and I learned to love him; but I was bound by an oath to the will of Judah, and I could not disobey. I wish I could save him now."

"Can you do it, Osmir? I do not wish that the king should kill him. We thought you might have access to his dungeon—that you might, at some time, be set to guard him."

"I returned the guard, after a moment's reflection, 'If I succeed, I shall not fear to meet the lieutenant. If I am not in the garden at the time appointed, or very near that time, you may know that I have done all that lay in my power. Have you more to say?'"

"No, good Osmir. Go to the work, and do the best you can."

He spoke a simple word of promise, and then turned from the apartment, Albia conducting him down, and guiding him out by a small door in the garden wall.

"Albia," he said, as he stood beneath the low arch—and his tone showed that he did not speak lightly—"your mistress does not dream of the danger I must undergo in this work; but I will be true to my promise, I will do all I can. If Selim will not join me, there is the end; but if he falls in with me, then we both put our lives at stake, and the prize may be won. I hope we shall succeed."

The bondmaid watched the retreating form until it was lost in the darkness, and then she closed the gate, and turned her steps back towards the house.

CHAPTER X. In the Dungeon.

The robber chieftain had been placed in one of the most gloomy dungeons beneath the royal palace, his legs and arms loaded with chains, and his feet shackled to a bolt in the floor. How long he had been there he could not tell. Night and day were the same in the living tomb. Food and drink had been brought to him thrice, and a masked brute had been in to remove the tray. He had but one hope of escape, and even that was so feeble that it would not bear the entertainment.

He thought if his followers should discover where he was, they might possibly dare to attempt his release; but when he came to weigh all the circumstances, he dared not think they would do it. In short, Julian had made up his mind that death was very near to him.

And what had he to live for? What, but revenge upon the King of Damascus? He had no parents—no relatives—nothing on earth of his own blood which he could claim. There might be living in the city some human being of his kin; but he did not know of such. He loved his brave fellows; but they could do without him. They were bold, stout men, and could look for themselves. What else was there? There were some poor families in the mountains—some friends upon the plain—and a few dependent ones near the river; but Hobaddan would care for them. What else was there?

The youthful chieftain bowed his head, and pressed his heavily laden hands upon his heart. There was one more—one whom he had hoped to see again in the coming time—one who had left an impression in his soul which had warmed and quickened his whole being. But why think of her? What could the beautiful daughter of Aboul Cassem be to him? In a few short days she would be the wife of his bitterest enemy.

Thus mused the prisoner, standing erect, with his manacled hands folded upon his bosom, when he was aroused from his reflections by the sound of creaking bolts, and in a few moments more the door of his dungeon was opened, and the rays of a lamp penetrated the place. Two men entered, closing the door after them; but the eyes of the chieftain were not yet used enough to the light to distinguish either their forms or features. Presently, however, as they addressed each other, he recognized the two blacks who had so fatally deceived him, and his first impulse was to raise his heavy chains and smite them down; but they were not near enough to be thus reached.

"Osmir—Selim," he said, "are you here?"

"Yes, my master," replied Osmir. "Have you come to kill me?"

"No."

"To bear me to the king?"

"What, then? You have the watch over me?"

"Yes."

"And the king fears not to trust you?"

"You see he does trust us."

"Aye—as I trusted you. O, you are two ungrateful villains. When you came to me in the forest, I believed your tale of woe, and took pity upon you; and I meant to be kind to you, and make your lot a pleasant one. I looked into your faces, and I thought you were honest. I did not trust you from your speech, but from your honest looks. However, it is past. And how shall we seek ye?"

"Good master," said Osmir, speaking earnestly, "before I tell you why we are now here, let me say to you that we are not without hearts, and that we have some store of honesty. When we went to your camp, we went in the service of another master, whom we were bound to serve. We had sworn that we would capture you if we could. But, sir, after we had seen you, and known you, we would have rescinded had the thing been possible. We asked Judah to free us from the task, but he refused."

"Why do you tell me this story now?"

"That you may know the reason of our being here."

"You action speaks for itself. Look at these chains; and mark the fate to which I am doomed."

"I meant not the action of the past, good master; I alluded to action that was to come."

"Action to come?"

"Yes. Selim and I are here to speak of your release from this dungeon. Hold—let our words be few, for the time is short. We have promised that we would lead you forth from Horam's power if the thing were possible."

"Promised whom?" asked Julian.

"The black hesitated. He knew not that he should use the name of the princess, so he finally answered:

"Hobaddan is in the city, and our promise has been sent to him. But—there is something more. If we lead you from this place, we do so in the face of great danger. We have planned for that, and have freely staked our lives in the work. But, if we succeed, and you are free, we can never more return to Damascus. If we go with you from this dungeon, we must go with you from the city, and remain with you."

Julian believed that the black was speaking truly and honestly.

"Certainly," he said, "if you lead me in safety from the bonds that now encompass me, I will give you such return as you may desire. You may remain with me, if you like, or I will give you safe conduct into the land of the Syrians."

"Your word is enough, my master; and henceforth Selim and I are your servants. We change our allegiance, and the proof of our fidelity shall be manifest in this first act of our service. We have dangers to meet, sir."

"Talk not of dangers," cried the chieftain. "Throw off these chains; give me a sword; and lead me to the upper world; and I ask no more. Once again I trust you, and if you prove true, my gratitude shall be your while I live!"

Without further words Osmir proceeded to the work he had come to perform. Selim held the lantern, while he loosed the irons from Julian's limbs; and very soon the chieftain stepped forth with his limbs free.

"There is no time to waste," said Osmir, as he cast the chains upon the floor. "We have good swords at hand, and for the rest we must trust to our wit and strength. There is danger enough between this dungeon and the open air; but I am ready to meet it."

"By the gods," cried Julian, as he grasped the sword which Osmir had placed in his hand. "I can laugh at danger now. Lead on, and let this present hour be the last of Horam's power!"

(To be continued.)

HARPOONING BLUE WHALES.

The Harpoon Gun is a Cruel Instrument of Destruction.

To pursue the blue whale successfully is, according to an interesting article in Pearson's Magazine, a complicated undertaking. For instance, one of the requirements is a boat that can steam twelve knots an hour, and which is furnished with a formidable weapon known as the harpoon-gun. The harpoon-gun is a ponderous piece of apparatus laced on a raised platform on the prow of the whaler, and consists of a short, stout cannon, mounted on a broad pedestal, on which it can rotate horizontally. The gun has also a vertical motion, and can be turned quickly in whatever direction the prow of the ship dominates. On the top of the gun are "sights" for aiming, just as in a rifle. Behind is the stock, which is grasped in the hand when firing the gun, and beneath it the trigger. The breech is a box-like arrangement, situated just where the stock is fastened to the gun proper. The gun is loaded in the ordinary way from the muzzle, and the harpoon is tightly rammed into it. To discharge the gun, a small cartridge, with a wire attached, is first put into the breech. Pressure on the trigger causes a pull on the wire, which ignites the cartridge and discharges the gun simultaneously. The harpoon is about six feet in length and very massive. It consists essentially of three parts, the anterior conical portion, the movable barbs, and the shaft. The anterior conical piece is an explosive shell filled with gunpowder, and screws on to the rest of the harpoon. The explosive shell is fired with a time-fuse after the harpoon is imbedded in the whale. Taken all in all the harpoon-gun is about the most exquisitely cruel instrument of destruction devised by the ingenuity of man! But it is only when one sees and knows the prodigious brute it is meant to destroy, that one realizes that it is nevertheless none too effective. The gun is never discharged at a greater distance than fifty feet, and seldom indeed at more than thirty from the whale. To be able to get so near requires not only very fine seamanship but a very intimate knowledge of the habits of the animal.—Philadelphia Times.

Hugest Sea Creature.

Of all the uncanny creatures in the animal kingdom the one whose acquaintance is hardest to make is the blue whale, the largest of all the whales, and, indeed, one of the most colossal animals, living or extinct, known to science. You will look in vain for him in zoological collections, in menageries, or even in museums. A brute 90 feet in length and weighing just as many tons does not lend itself to preservation or stuffing, and the few skeletons of him which do exist give one no idea of what he is like. The blue whale is hunted by the Norwegians chiefly for the sake of his oil, and is of considerable value, a full-grown specimen being worth from \$1,500 to \$1,500.

TALMAGE'S SERMON.

DEFEATS OF OBLIVION LAST SUNDAY'S SUBJECT.

"No Shall Be No More Remembered"—Job. xxiv. 30—"The Righteous Shall Be in Everlasting Remembrance"—Psalm cxli. 6.

(Copyright, 1901, by Louis Klopfch, N. Y.) Washington, Sept. 29.—In this discourse Dr. Talmage shows how any one can be widely and forever recollected and cheers despondent Christian workers; texts, Job xxiv, 30, "He shall be no more remembered," and Psalm cxli, 6, "The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance."

Of oblivion and its defeats I speak today. There is an old monster that swallows down everything. It crunches individuals, families, communities, states, nations, continents, hemispheres, worlds. Its diet is made up of years, of centuries, of ages, of cycles, of millenniums, of eons. That monster is called by Noah Webster and all other dictionaries "Oblivion." It is a steep down which everything rolls. It is a conflagration in which everything is consumed. It is a dirge which all orchestras play and a period at which everything stops. It is the cemetery of the human race. It is the domain of forgetfulness. Oblivion! At times it throws a shadow over all of us, and I would not pronounce it today if I did not come armed in the strength of the eternal God on your behalf to attack it, to route it, to demolish it.

Why, just look at the way the families of the earth disappear. For awhile they are together, inseparable, and to each other indispensable, and then they part, some by marriage going to establish other homes, and some leave this life, and a century is long enough to plant a family, develop it, prosper it and obliterate it. So the generations vanish. Walk up Pennsylvania avenue, Washington; Broadway, New York; State street, Boston; Chestnut street, Philadelphia; the Strand, London; Princess street, Edinburgh; Champs Elysees, Paris; Unter den Linden, Berlin, and you will meet in this year, 1901 not one person who walked there in the year 1801. What engulment! All the ordinary efforts at perpetuation art dead failures. Walter Scott's Old Mortality may go round with his chisel to recut the faded epitaphs on tombstones, but Old Oblivion has a quicker chisel with which he can cut out a thousand epitaphs while Old Mortality is cutting one epitaph. Whole libraries of biographies devoured of bookworms or unread of the rising generations. All the signs of the stores and warehouses of great firms have changed, unless the grandsons think that it is an advantage to keep the old sign up because the name of the ancestor was more commendatory than the name of the descendant. The city of Rome stands today, but dig down deep enough, and you come to another Rome, buried, and go down still farther, and you will find a third Rome. Jerusalem stands today, but dig down deep enough and you will find a Jerusalem underneath and go on and deeper down a third Jerusalem. Alexandria, Egypt, on top of an Alexandria, and the second on top of the third. Many of the ancient cities are buried thirty feet deep or fifty feet deep or 100 feet deep. What was the matter? Any special calamity? No. The wind and waves and sands and flying dust are all undertakers and gravediggers, and if the world stands long enough the present Washington and New York and London will have on top of them other Washingtons and New Yorks and Londons, and only after digging and boring and blasting will the archaeologists of far distant centuries come down as far as the highest spires and domes and turrets of our present American and European cities.

The Roll of Armes.

Call the roll of the armies of Baldwin I. or of Charles Martel or of Marlborough or of Mithridates or of Prince Frederick or of Cortes, and not one answer will you hear. Stand them in line and call the roll of the 1,000,000 men in the army of Thebes. Not one answer. Stand them in line, the 1,700,000 infantry and the 200,000 cavalry of the Assyrian army under Ninus, and call the roll. Not one answer. Stand in line the 1,000,000 men of Sesostris, the 1,200,000 men of Artaxerxes at Cunaxa, the 2,641,000 men under Xerxes at Thermopylae and call the long roll. Not one answer. At the opening of our civil war the men of the northern and southern armies were told that if they fell in battle their names would never be forgotten by their country. Out of the million men who fell in battle or died in military hospitals you cannot call the names of a thousand, nor the names of 500 nor the names of 100 nor the names of fifty. Oblivion! Are the feet of the dancers who at the ball of the Duchess of Richmond at Brussels the night before Waterloo all still? All still. Are the ears that heard the guns of Bunker Hill all dead? All dead. Are the eyes that saw the coronation of George II. all closed? All closed. Oblivion! A hundred years from now there will not be a being on this earth that knew we ever lived.

In some old family record a descendant studying up the ancestral line may spell out our name and from the faded ink with great effort find that some person by our name was born somewhere in the nineteenth century, but they will know no more about us than we know about the color of a child's eyes born last night in a village in Patagonia. Tell me something about your great-grandfather. What were his features? What did he do? What year was he born? What year did he die? And your great-grandmother? Will you describe the style of the hat she wore, and how did she and your great-grandfather get on in each other's companionship? Was it March weather or June? Oblivion! That mountain surge rolls over everything. Even the pyramids are dying. Not a day passes but there is chiseled off a chip of that granite. The sea is tripping over the land, and what is going on at our Atlantic coast is going on all around the world, and the continents are crumbling into the waves, and while this is transpiring on the outside of the world, the hot chisel of the internal fire is digging under the foundations of the earth and cutting its way out toward the surface. It surprises me to hear the people say they do not think the world will finally be burned up when all the scientists will tell you that it has for ages been on fire.

Why, there is only a crust between us and the furnaces inside raging to get out. Oblivion! The world itself will roll into it as easily as a school-boy's india rubber ball rolls down a hill, and when our world goes it is so interlocked by the law of gravitation with other worlds that they will go too, and so far from having our memory perpetuated by a monument of Aberdeen granite in this world there is no world in sight of our strongest telescope that will be a sure pediment for any slab of commemoration of the fact that we ever lived or died at all. Our earth is struck with death. The axletree of the constellations will break and let down the populations of other worlds. Stellar, lunar, solar, mortality. Oblivion! It can swallow and will swallow whole galaxies of worlds as easily as a crocodile takes down a frog.

Yet oblivion does not remove or swallow everything that had better not be removed or swallowed. The old monster is welcome to his meal. This world would long ago have been overcrowded if not for the merciful removal of nations and generations. What if all the books had lived that were ever written and printed and published? The libraries would by their immensity have obstructed intelligence and made all research impossible. The fatal epidemic of books was a merciful epidemic. Many of the state and national libraries today are only morgues, in which dead books are waiting for some one to come and recognize them. What if all the people that had been born were still alive? We would have been elbowed by our ancestors of ten centuries ago, and people who ought to have said their last word 2,000 years ago would snarl at us, saying, "What are you doing here?" There would have been no room to turn around. Some of the past generations of mankind were not worth remembering. The first useful thing that many people did was to die, their cradle a misfortune and their grave a boon. This world was hardly a comfortable place to live in before the middle of the eighteenth century. So many things have come into the world that were not fit to stay in we ought to be glad they were put out. The waters of Lethe, the fountain of forgetfulness, are a healthful draft. The history we have of the world in ages past is always one sided and cannot be depended on. History is fiction illustrated by a few straggling facts.

Why We Should Be Remembered. Now, I have told you that this oblivion of which I have spoken has its defeats and that there is no more reason why we should not be distinctly and vividly and gloriously remembered five hundred million billion trillion quadrillion quintillion years from now than that we should be remembered six weeks. I am going to tell you how the thing can be done and will be done. We may build this "everlasting remembrance," as my text styles it, into the supernal existence of those to whom we do kindness in this world. You must remember that this infirm and treacherous faculty which we now call memory is in the future state to be complete and perfect. "Everlasting remembrance!" Nothing will slip the stout grip of that celestial faculty. Did you help a widow pay her rent? Did you find for that man released from prison a place to get honest work? Did you pick up a child fallen on the curbstone and by a stick of candy put in his hand stop the hurt on his scratched knee? Did you assure a business man swamped by the stringency of the money market that times would after awhile be better? Did you lead a Magdalen of the street into a midnight mission, where the Lord said to her, "Neither do I condemn thee. Go and sin no more?" Did you tell a man clear discouraged in his waywardness and hopeless and plotting suicide that for him was near by a lover in which he might wash and a coronet of eternal blessedness he might wear? What are epitaphs in graveyards, what are eulogiums in presence of those whose breath is in their nostrils, what are unread biographies in the alcoves of a city library, compared with the imperishable records you have made in the illumined memories of those to whom you did such kindnesses? Forget them? They cannot forget them. Notwithstanding all their might and splendor there are some things the glorified of heaven cannot do, and this is one of them. They cannot forget an earthly kindness done. They have no outlines to part that cable. They have no strength to hurl into oblivion that benefaction. Has Paul forgotten the inhabitants of Malta, who extended the island hospitality when he and others with him had felt, added to a ship-

wreck, the drenching rain and the sharp cold? Has the victim of the highwayman on the road to Jericho forgotten the good Samaritan with a measure of oil and wine and a free ride to the hostelry? Have the English soldiers who went up to God from the Crimean battlefields forgotten Florence Nightingale? Through all eternity will the northern and southern soldiers forget the northern and southern women who administered to the dying boys in blue and gray after the awful fights in Tennessee and Pennsylvania and Virginia and Georgia, which turned every house and barn and shed into an hospital and incarnated the Susquehanna and the James and the Chattahoochee and the Savannah with brave blood? The kindnesses you do to others will stand as long in the appreciation of others as the gates of heaven will stand, as the "house of many mansions" will stand, as long as the throne of God will stand.

Defeat of Oblivion. Another defeat of oblivion will be found in the character of those whom we rescue, uplift or save. Character is eternal. Suppose by a right influence we aid in transforming a bad man into a good man, a dolorous man into a happy man, a disheartened man into a courageous man, every stroke of that work done will be immortalized. There may never be so much as one line in a newspaper regarding it or no mortal tongue may ever whisper it into human ear, but wherever that soul shall go your work upon it shall go, wherever that soul rises your work on it will rise, and so long as that soul will last your work on it will last. Do you suppose there will ever come such an idiotic lapse in the history of that soul in heaven that it shall forget that you invited him to Christ; that you, by prayer or gospel word, turned him round from the wrong way to the right way? No such insanity will ever smite a heavenly citizen. It is not half as well on earth knows that Christopher Wren planned and built St. Paul's as it will be known in all heaven that you were the instrumentality of building a temple for the sky. We teach a Sabbath class or put a Christian tract in the hand of a passerby or testify for Christ in a prayer meeting or preach a sermon and go home discouraged, as though nothing had been accomplished, when we had been character building with a material that no frost or earthquake or rolling of the centuries can damage or bring down.

There is no sublimer art on earth than architecture. With pencil and rule and compass the architect sits down alone and in silence and evolves from his own brain a cathedral or a national capitol or a massive home before he leaves that table, and then he goes out and unrolls his plans and calls carpenters and mason and artisans of all sorts to execute his design, and when it is finished he walks around the vast structure and sees the completion of the work with high satisfaction, and on a stone at some corner of the building the architect's name may be chiseled. But the storms do their work, and time, that takes down everything, will yet take down that structure until there shall not be one stone left upon another. But there is a soul in heaven.

Graven on God's Hand. There is another and a more complete defeat for oblivion, and that is in the heart of God himself. You have seen a sailor roll up his sleeve and show you his arm tattooed with the figure of a favorite ship, perhaps the first one in which he ever sailed. You have seen a soldier roll up his sleeve and show you his arm tattooed with the figure of a fortress where he was garrisoned or the face of a dead general under whom he fought. You have seen many a hand tattooed with the face of a loved one before or after marriage. This custom of tattooing is almost as old as the world. It is some colored liquid punctured into the flesh so indelibly that nothing can wash it out. It may have been there fifty years, but when the man goes into his coffin that picture will go with him on hand or arm. Now, God says that he has tattooed us upon his hands. There can be no other meaning in the forty-ninth chapter of Isaiah, where God says, "Behold, I have graven thee on the palms of my hands!" It was as much as to say: "I cannot open my hand to help, but I think of you. I cannot spread across my hands to bless but I think of you. Wherever I go up and down the heavens I take these two pictures of you with me. They are so wrought into my being that I can not lose them. As long as my hands last the memory of you will last. Not on the back of my hands, as though to announce you to others, but on the palms of my hands, for myself to look at and study and love. Though I hold the winds in my fist, no cyclone shall uproot the inscription of your name and your face, and though I hold the ocean in the hollow of my hand, its billowing shall not wash out the record of my remembrance. 'Behold, I have graven thee on the palms of my hands!'"

Spaniards Proposed a Bullfight. They tell a story to the effect that when the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals proposed to establish a branch in a leading city of Spain the municipal body courteously accepted the proposal and offered to hold a grand bull fight at once to furnish the funds.—Troy Times.

Australian Apples. Parts of Australia are becoming lively rivals to Canada and the United States in the European apple trade. Tasmania, especially, has been found a first-class apple-raising country. There are 2,378 acres in apple orchards there and the product in 1899 was 223,315 bushels.