

they fled in all directions, pursued by the Hebrews who cut them to pieces.

Fall of Nineveh. — 23. The news of this shameful defeat reassured all the enemies of the kings of Nineveh. Exhausted by its long wars, the Assyrian Empire was attacked by Cyaxares, king of Media. Instead of marching against the enemy, as he had been commanded, Nabopolassar, governor of Babylon, had himself proclaimed king and joined forces with the Medes.

Nineveh was taken and burnt, and Assyria ceased to be a nation (606 B. C.).

Excavations bring to light even to-day signs of the fearful conflagration which caused the fall of the buildings of Nineveh.

IV. — New Babylonian Empire. — 24. Two new empires grew out of the division of the Assyrian Empire : that of the Medes, who took Assyria, properly so-called ; and Babylon, which included Chaldea, Mesopotamia, Syria and Palestine. Nabopolassar assumed the kingship of Babylon. This new Babylonian or Chaldean Empire lasted scarcely half a century.

Nabuchodonosor II. — 25. All the greatness of Babylon may be summed up in one reign, that of Nabuchodonosor II, son of Nabopolassar. Endowed with a warlike nature and indomitable energy, this king was equal to the most famous Assyrians conquerors. He seized Tyre which had withstood assaults for thirteen years. He took Jerusalem twice, the first time (606) carrying off the treasures of the Temple and of the king's palace, and leading into captivity King Joachim, the prophet Ezechiel, and all the chiefs, warriors, mechanics and blacksmiths. He then placed Sedecias, Joachim's uncle, on the throne.

The "Seventy Years' Captivity" is reckoned from this period.

Sedecias swore allegiance to Nabuchodonosor, but nine years later, despite the warnings of the prophet Jeremias,

