

Vs. 19, 20. Having carefully arranged his plans, Nehemiah explains them to the leaders among the people, bidding each to be ready for any danger and prepared to do his part, while at the same time, he declares that their safety and success depend on God's blessing and protection.

Light from the East

By Rev. James Ross, D.D., London, Ont.

WEAPONS—The Egyptian sword was straight, two-edged, and tapered to a sharp point, and was about three feet in length. The Hebrew sword seems to have been somewhat shorter and lighter, for Joab disembowelled Amasa with a single stroke of it, 2 Sam. 20 : 10. It was carried in a sheath slung at the left side from a belt round the middle or over the right shoulder. The SPEAR was more depended on than the sword, as it was more easily made and was more effective in charges,

or when the army was drawn up expecting an attack. It consisted of a shaft from six to eight feet in length, which was at first pointed with the horn of some animal, and later with metal. The BOW—was commonly made of wood, or of two horns joined at the base. Metallic bows, perhaps of bronze, are mentioned as being especially strong. The strings were of gut, or hide, or deer sinews, and the foot was used in bending the bow. The arrows were carried in a quiver, and were sometimes poisoned. The SHIELD—was a wooden frame covered with hide and bordered with metal of various shapes, often like a Gothic window. It was studded with bosses to break the force of blows, and anointed with oil to make the weapons glance from it. The HABERGEON—was a coat of mail, composed of small plates of metal, about an inch wide, overlapping one another like the scales of a fish.

APPLICATION

By Rev. Clarence Mackinnon, B.D., Winnipeg

Sanballat . . . Tobiah . . . Arabians . . . Ammonites . . . Ashdodites . . . very wroth, v. 7. So the foes of a good cause line up against it when it threatens their selfish interests.

Bound to be Beaten "The whole world is against you," it was said to a certain reformer. "Very well," was the calm reply, "then I am against the whole world." The advocates, for example, of temperance and a quiet Sabbath go counter to the desire of many for pleasure or gain. Of course these people will be angry. But their anger is not argument. In their words there is much wrath, but little weight. They have neither reason nor right on their side, and they are bound to be beaten. The weapons of truth are invincible. Against them no forces of evil can prevail.

Set a watch, v. 9. The fabled Argus had a hundred eyes in his head, only two of which ever slept at once. It seemed impossible to take advantage of this ever watchful creature. But Mercury played so seductively on his pipe, and kept waving his sleep-producing wand so effectively, that for a moment the whole hundred eyes were closed. That moment was fatal. Advantage was taken of it,

and the head of Argus was cut off with a single stroke. So our great enemy seeks to lure us from our vigilance. Our safety depends upon our keeping ceaseless watch.

Much rubbish, v. 10. Sometimes it costs nearly as much labor to clear the foundation as to erect the building. In London they have to dig through the accumulated debris of generations before reaching solid rock.

What rubbish, too, has not the Christian to rid himself of—false ideas of God, wrong standards of conduct, evil habits that have been permitted to grow and sinful associations that have been formed. But the foundation must be cleared, if the building is to stand solid.

Ten times, v. 12. "Hard pounding, gentlemen; but we will see who can pound the longest," said the Duke of Wellington at the battle of Waterloo, where Napoleon kept flinging again and again his choicest troops against the firm battalions of the British army. And in the moral struggle of life, it is the perseverance of the saint pitted against the persistence of the devil. Not once, but many times, does he whisper, "Desist. What's the use ?