

struggles between the Egyptian army and populace, and Caesar's small force, during which the library of 700,000 volumes was burned, and many valuable records lost. How the Egyptians were finally defeated, and young Ptolemy drowned in the Nile. Cleopatra and her younger brother were then declared rulers of Egypt, he was only eleven, 4 years after she poisoned him and ruled alone. For 3 months after, Caesar passed whole nights feasting with Cleopatra, and she had one son by him, he then left for Rome, where he was assassinated. A triumvirate followed, and Anthony, who was one of them, after defeating Brutus and Cassius (the assassins of Caesar) at Phillipi, marched into Asia and summoned eastern princes to appear before him. Cleopatra sailed across the eastern Mediterranean to Tarsus to meet him; never was equipage more splendid and magnificent than hers, the stern of her ship flamed with gold, the sails were purple, and oars inlaid with silver, a pavilion of cloth of gold was on deck, under which appeared the Queen, robed like Venus, and surrounded by the most beautiful virgins of her court, some representing Nereids, others the graces, flutes, hautboys and harps warbled the softest airs, to which the oars kept time, perfumes were burning on deck spreading their odors far and wide, and the whole population of Tarsus turned out to meet her. Anthony fell in love at once, each feasted the other alternately, and they vied with each other in the cost of their entertainments, spending one quarter of a million dollars on a single supper. To win a wager as to which should give the most costly supper, she dissolved one of her pearl earrings, worth a million dollars each, in vinegar and drank it off, and was about to do the same with the other, but the umpire awarded in her favor. Anthony neglected his conquests in the East and passed years in sailing the Nile with Cleopatra, in feasting and licentiousness to the disgust of his friends in Rome. In one of his journeys to Rome he married Octavia, sister to the young Caesar, and afterward renounced her. Cleopatra spoke most of the languages of the known world, seldom needing an interpreter in speaking to ambassadors of other nations; she re-established the libraries of the Ptolemys, Antony sending her 200,000 volumes from Pergamos for that purpose. It ended in open war between Antony and Caesar, at the battle of Actium Antony was defeated, though he was getting the best of it till Cleopatra got terrified at the tumult of battle and fled with 50 of her galleys from the engagement. As the end approached she got worse, not hesitating to poison anyone in her way, and plotted to give up Antony to save her throne. After she was a prisoner, and to avoid the indignity of being compelled to grace Caesar's triumph, she had an asp brought in in a basket of figs, with which she killed herself.

Of the greatness of Israel under David and Solomon the book of Kings and Chronicles give the best accounts; when the Queen of Sheba came with costly presents to see the wisdom and greatness of Solomon, the stories of which she could scarcely credit, and lo! the half had not been told her. She gave him at her departure a royal present of 120 talents of gold (over 300,000 dollars), besides spices and precious stones. His fleet in the Red Sea brought him the wealth of the east, and his fleets from Tyre and Tarshish came every three years with gold and silver, ivory, apes and peacocks. But the glory of Israel departed; about 400 years after they were carried captives to Babylon. Babylon had been but a minor town in Syria till the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. It was built in the form of a square; each side of which at the outer wall was 14 miles in length, en-

closing an area of nearly 200 square miles; the walls were 200 cubits or 340 feet high and 85 feet wide; the Euphrates ran through the centre; 100 gates of brass gave access to the city, quays lined the river, communicated with also by gates of brass. On one side of the river stood the King's palace, on the other the temple of Belus or Baal, country houses with parks and gardens were within its walls, canals carried verdure and fertility into every quarter. Without the walls, trenches and reservoirs received the overflow of the Euphrates in times of flood, thus preventing floods and retaining a supply for the dry seasons. The hanging gardens were a series of terraces raised one above another to a great height and planted with rare trees and shrubs, and were a gift of Nebuchadnezzar to his queen, a Median princess, who pined on those vast Babylonian plains for something to remind her of her native hills. Inscriptions tell how the Monarch prided himself on his palace home. Silver, gold, and immense treasures were collected there, among which was the plunder from Jerusalem. Of this glorious building, still called the Kasr (or palace), nothing is left but a mass of loose bricks, tiles and fragments of stone. From the centre of which rises a solid mass of masonry, still entire and retaining remains of architectural ornament. It was of this city that Nebuchadnezzar spoke, when he said: "This Babylon that I have built, by the might of my power and for the honor of my majesty; and the same hour he was driven from among men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds claws, until seven times passed over him. After that he was reestablished in his kingdom, and more excellent majesty was added unto him, (see 4th chapter Daniel) and he had cause to acknowledge God to be King of kings and Lord of lords. His son Belshazzar so abused the Jewish captives that God doomed Babylon to destruction, see Isaiah 13-19 to 23.

"And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of Chaldea's excellency shall be overthrown as Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there; but wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; their houses shall be full of dolesome creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there."

All this has literally come to pass, the site of Babylon is an abomination of desolation; the overflow of the Euphrates instead of running into canals runs into marshes and lagoons, spreading miasma around; but the embankments of the former canals can be traced for miles through the yellow sands.

The means of its destruction were foretold 200 years before, Isaiah 45, 1 to 3:

"I will loosen the loins of kings, to loosen before him (Cyrus) the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut. I will go before thee, to make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron; and I will give thee treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which call thee by name, am God of Israel."

Cyrus with the Persian army was before the gates, but he didn't attempt to scale those high walls, he used the same tactics Arabi Pasha is using now, he dug trenches above and below the city, and on that dread night, when Belshazzar was holding his great feast, and had crowned his wickedness by bringing the vessels of gold and silver that had been taken from the Temple at Jerusalem, for his guests

and concubines to drink wine out of at their pagan revels; when lo! the handwriting on the wall! "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin," pronounced his doom (see Dan. chap. 5th). On that night Cyrus was well acquainted with what was going on inside the city, and after dark drained off the river into the reservoirs, and his army above and below in two columns marched up the bed of the river. The gates from the river, to fulfill prophecy, had been left open by the negligence of the guards; the two columns reached the King's palace without opposition, and Belshazzar coming forth to enquire the cause of the commotion was slain, (see Dan. 5th and 30th). Who can paint the horrors of that awful night better than the prophet Jeremiah (51st 30 to 32) in foretelling it:—

"The mighty men of Babylon have foreborne to fight, they have remained in their holds, their might had failed; they became as women; they (the enemy) have burned her dwelling places; her bars are broken. One post shall run to meet another, to show the king of Babylon that his kingdom is taken at one end, and that the passages are stopped, and the reeds they have burned with fire, and the men of war are affrighted."

Never indeed was the doom of an empire more distinctly traced than by those fingers of a man's hand, which wrote the words which only the prophet of Jehovah could interpret. For a moment it seemed as if that doom were to be averted, by a monarch greater than the Babylonian, Mede or Persian, undreamed of when Cyrus was at the gates. 200 years after, when Alexander had carried his conquests beyond the Indus, he formed the design of creating a large eastern empire, with Babylon as its capital. It was to be revived with more than its former glory. Returning to Babylon to complete his plans, he had already commenced the repair of the canals, when he was feasting in the palace halls; he had twice drunk a huge goblet of wine which held six bottles, when he fell to the ground and died shortly after. The dream was gone. No successor of Alexander ever attempted the reconstruction of Babylon. Babylon is fallen! is fallen! her stately palaces and temples now heaps of ruined brickwork, have become the hair of wild beasts. "Their houses are full of doleful creatures, the wild beasts of the islands cry in their desolate houses and dragons in their pleasant palaces." What more complete answer can the sceptic have, than the narrative of Babylon. I will speak of other Syrian cities in another letter. Yours, etc.

A. B. GREENWOOD.

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[From the Boston Globe.]



Messrs. Editors:—

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