

children of Judah smote it with the edge of the sword, and consumed it by fire, to that memorable time when Christ pronounced his warning against her, she was besieged seventeen times. She was surrounded by warriors bent upon rapine and bloodshed, and all the crimes incident upon the wars of ancestral times. They were in some respects, wars terrific in power and dreadful in the shedding of blood. Not only did warriors fall as the victims to these terrible conflicts, but in many instances the women and innocent children. Twice, her enemies, not satisfied with the inflictions usually visited upon the conquered, completely raised her to the ground. Twice her walls were levelled. Yet such was the inspiration of love and devotion to her, that she rose again, as if by magic, upon the ruins of her former grandeur. The fact of this rebuilding vast cities after remarkable destruction is not merely a thing of the present era, but a remarkable one of the past. It may be that the constant succession of wars prepared the people, at all times, for such dangers, and the enthusiastic love of places and of home, prompted to immediate action in reconstruction, hence that cities almost immediately rose out of their ruins. At any rate such seems to have been the case with Jerusalem.

There was, doubtless, an increased enthusiasm in the case of this memorable city arising from the fact that she was the sacred city, endeared to the people by ties that bound the inhabitants by no other. Such ties formed the great incentive to the vigorous action that caused her so many times to rise after such terrible destruction.

Amid all the terrible calamities which befel her she still retained a great commercial importance, and was the repository of vast stores of wealth.

Of the old city, the last war and the last siege finally came, and her final overthrow was accomplished. And though new buildings were reared above the ruins, yet the old homes of the ancients were buried beneath the soil. There, beneath the city of the present, we find that of hallowed memory; that around which so many fond Masonic remembrances and history cluster. That temple, upon whose altars Masonic rites were, emblematically, so often offered, is now beneath the soil. And there, beneath the present, and amid the ruins of the old city, let us wander awhile and gather from the remnants of her former grandeur the evidence of her power.

We enter large subterranean caverns. But what are they? In other days, what purposes did they serve? What great object or benefit did they accomplish? Were they the grand aqueducts conveying the water into the city from the adjacent hills? If so, then, though now beneath the present city, yet we must be above the former. If not aqueducts, what then? Here are questions that are more easily propounded than answered. For ages past, the dead have lain within, in their silent, wakeless slumber, and we wander amid the cold, silent and entombed bodies, which, perhaps, wandered within the streets of the city in troublous times.

We leave the narrow confines of these caverns of the dead and a vast quarry opens to our view. Here stones, at some age, long remote, and for purposes upon which the page of history is silent were raised, hewn, squared and numbered. Here are the chippings from the blocks taken from the rocky sides. If these silent rocks could speak, what volumes might they not tell of the workmen in apprentice dress; of men skilled in the use of the hammer, and of the Master whose voice and mind directed and controlled? But all is silent, there is no voice to tell the great, sad history of that wonderful city. It is covered beneath the accumulated rubbish of ages.

At times we wander beneath *massive arches* of huge masonry work, with now and then rooms and galleries of similar construction branching off in different directions, but these, in many instances, are filled with a loose soil, which crumbles almost at the touch, and so easily that it sometimes becomes a matter of danger to undertake the removal of the rocks. At some places inscriptions, though few, are found within these arches. It is, perhaps, impossible to arrive at any positive idea as to what these were, although we are led to the belief that they were the aqueducts of the oriental city. If this be true and they were above the city, there is no telling what great treasures may yet be discovered in the final and more complete excavation of the city.

The present Mosque of Omar seems to have been constructed upon the walls of another vast structure, which in turn has been erected upon that of another, and, although the true foundation has not been ascertained, evidences, seemingly conclusive, exist, to lead to the conjecture and probable fact that these walls were erected upon the wall of the original temple. The wall is built with immense stone several feet in thickness.

Remnants of columns, and, in one place, the capital of a pilaster elegantly and elaborately carved, which belonged to the supporting columns of some vast building or perhaps to the aqueducts in question are found in different places amid the ruins. In one room was the base of a large Corinthian column, and at another a portion of a fluted column so completely imbedded in the earth above as to be suspended several feet from the floor of the room.