

On each side of this great square were twenty-five gates, which were formed of solid brass. Between every pair of these gates, were three towers; and four more at the four corners of this great square; every one of these towers was ten feet higher than the walls.

From the twenty-five gates on each side of this great square, went twenty-five streets, in straight lines to the gates, which were directly over against them, on the opposite side; so that the whole number of the streets was fifty; each fifteen miles long, twenty-five of which went one way, and twenty-five the other, directly crossing each other at right angles. There were also four half-streets, which had houses on one side, and the wall on the other; these went round the four sides of the city next the walls, and were each of them two hundred feet broad; the next were about one hundred and fifty. By these streets thus crossing each other, the whole city was divided into six hundred and seventy-six squares, each of which was two miles and a quarter in circumference.—Round these squares, on every side towards the streets, stood the houses, all built three or four stories high, and beautified with all manner of ornaments. The space in the middle of each square was employed for yards, gardens, and other such uses; so that Babylon was greater in appearance than in reality, nearly one half of the city being occupied in gardens and cultivated lands.

The Euphrates ran quite across the city, from the north to the south side. The wall, and the brazen gates extended along the banks on each side of the river. These gates were open in the day, but shut at night.

Near one of the palaces were the hanging gardens, so greatly celebrated by the Greeks. They contained a square of four hundred feet on every side, and were borne into the air in the manner of several large terraces one above another, till they were equal in height to the walls of the city. The ascent was from terrace to terrace on steps ten feet wide. The whole pile was sustained by vast arches, raised one above another, and strengthened by a wall on every side, of the thickness of twenty-two feet. On the top of the arches were first laid large flat stones, sixteen feet long, and four broad; over these was a layer of reeds, mixed with a great quantity of bitumen, upon which were two rows of bricks, closely cemented together with plaster. The whole was covered with sheets of lead, upon which lay the mould of the garden. The earth laid on them was so deep, that the greatest trees might take root in it; the terraces indeed were covered with them, as well as with all other plants and flowers that were proper to adorn a pleasure garden. In the upper terrace there was an engine, or kind of pump, by which water was drawn out of the river, and from thence the whole garden was watered. In the spaces between the several arches, upon which the whole structure rested, were large and magnificent apartments, that were very light, and had the advantage of a most beautiful prospect.

The temple of Belus was another of the astonishing public buildings of Babylon. This tower, it is said, exceeded in height the greatest of the pyramids of Egypt. But one can scarcely give credence to all which the historian has related of this wonderful city. It is however of the highest importance to observe, that its history as recorded by Herodotus and the ancient historians, remarkably proves the truth of the Scripture predictions. God had said, when Babylon was in all its glory, by his servants, that it should be besieged and taken by Cyrus, at a particular period; and this it appears, was really the case. It had been foretold that desolation should come upon it suddenly; and we are informed that it was taken in the dead of a night of general revelry. The Almighty had declared, that he would break in pieces before Cyrus the gates of brass; and they were left open on the sides of the river, so that when the current was turned aside, the city became the easy prey of its invaders. The prophet had written "that God would sweep it as with the besom of destruction;" Isa. xiv. 23, and all historians and travellers assure us that this has been literally the case. The Turks distinguish the spot where it once stood, by a word which means a place turned upside down; or most entirely devastated. "Babylon," said Isaiah, "shall never be inhabited; neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation; neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their folds there; but wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there." All these predictions have been fulfilled. The whole history of the city and neigh-

bourhood, affords a striking proof of the accomplishment of prophecy; and, consequently, of the truth of the Scriptures in general.

Perhaps the most interesting portion of the history of Herodotus is the narrative of the invasion of Greece by Xerxes. He informs us that this monarch employed four entire years in collecting his army, and in securing provisions. In the beginning of the fifth he began his march with an immense body of forces. It would be difficult to specify any nation of Asia which did not accompany him. One of their first labours was, to throw a bridge over the Hellespont, to unite Asia to Europe. This work was no sooner completed, than a great tempest arose, and destroyed it.

The childish monarch was so much enraged, when he heard of the circumstance, that he commanded three hundred lashes to be inflicted on the waters, and a pair of fetters to be thrown into the sea. "It is certain," says Herodotus, "that he ordered the persons who were to inflict the lashes, to use these barbarous and mad expressions; 'Thou ungracious water! thy master condemns thee to this punishment, for having injured him without provocation.—Xerxes, the king, will pass over thee, whether thou dost consent or not.'" What was much worse, this tyrant commanded the architects of the bridge demolished by the waves, to be beheaded.

"The march was conducted in the following order; first of all went those who had the care of the baggage: they were followed by a promiscuous body of strangers of all nations, without any regularity; next came a thousand horse, the flower of the Persian army, who were followed by the same number of spearmen, in like manner selected, trailing their pikes on the ground; behind these were ten sacred horses with very superb trappings; the sacred car of Jupiter was next in the procession, drawn by eight white horses; behind which, on foot, was the charioteer with the reins in his hand; for no mortal is permitted to sit in this car. Then came Xerxes himself, drawn in a magnificent chariot. A thousand of the noblest Persians attended his person, bearing their spears according to the custom of their country; and a thousand horse selected like the former, immediately succeeded. A body of ten thousand chosen infantry came next; a thousand of these had at the extremity of their spears, a pomegranate of gold; the other nine thousand had pomegranates of silver. They who preceded Xerxes, and trailed their spears, had their arms decorated with gold; they who followed him had, as we have described, golden pomegranates: these ten thousand foot were followed by an equal number of Persian cavalry; at an interval of about two furlongs, followed by a numerous, irregular, and promiscuous multitude." The river Scamander, it is said, failed in supplying water sufficient for themselves and their beasts of burden. In addition to the troops there were twelve hundred and seven ships.

On their arrival at Abydos, Xerxes, on a seat of white marble, placed on an eminence, reviewed his troops. When he saw the Hellespont covered with his ships, and the plain beneath him with his troops, he at first congratulated himself as happy, but afterwards burst into tears. He observed to one of his officers, that he wept to think, that not one of that immense multitude would be alive in a hundred years. "He might have found," says Seneca, "another subject of reflection, which would have more justly merited his tears and affliction, had he turned his thoughts on himself, and considered the reproaches he deserved for being the instrument of shortening that fatal term to millions of people, whom his cruel ambition was going to sacrifice in an unjust and unnecessary war."

Leonidas, king of Sparta, with a chosen band, determined to secure the pass of Thermopylae, by which Xerxes was now about to enter into the very heart of Greece. Xerxes, on approaching the spot, could not at first suppose, that a mere handful of men intended to oppose the progress of his vast army. After halting a few days, in which he expected to see them retreat, he ordered a detachment of soldiers to bring them alive into his presence. This they were not able to do, though the conflict endured for a whole day. The Persian king then sent a company composed of the flower of his troops, to arrest them; a great part of them perished in the attempt; and the eastern monarch was obliged to retire from the pass. This was also the case on the following day. After this a person offered to conduct the Persians through the path which led over the mountain to Thermopylae; and thus rendered ineffectual the valour of those Greeks, who to the amount of three hundred, perished at this station.