

Roman guard by the rebels speedily brought the Roman army before the walls of Jerusalem. In the meantime other factions arose, one headed by a person named John and another person named Simon, whose three separate mobs seized upon different parts of the city, each plundered and murdered such of the inhabitants as refused to join their own faction, or sympathized with or aided the others. In wanton recklessness they burned the chief warehouses and stores of grain and provisions, and like the Communists of our day who were burning and wrecking the beautiful city of Paris with the Prussians at their gates, they continued to slaughter each other, burn, pillage and destroy, in the most fiendish manner long after Titus had laid siege to the city. Just at the time also, when the Roman army appeared, the city was unusually full of people, for strangers were there from all parts of the land to celebrate the great annual festivals, and thus what stores of provisions had not been destroyed by the zealots, as they were called, speedily became exhausted, and famine gaunt and terrible made its appearance. The Romans battered down one wall after another, for Jerusalem had then three walls, but the Jews fought with great desperation. Such as were caught by the Romans endeavoring to escape were crucified in view of the miserable inhabitants, until it became difficult to find sufficient stakes for the purpose or room to plant them. Then Titus, to render escape from within or assistance from without impossible, constructed a wall completely around the city, with strong guard-houses at intervals, thus verifying the wonderful prediction of our Saviour, "The days shall come upon thee that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee and compass thee around and keep thee in on every side." Then indeed the famine raged with all its horrors, the weak were tortured and murdered to secure their supposed little stores of food. Six hundred thousand dead bodies were thrown out of the gates, and the largest houses were filled full and then shut up. But finally the Romans overcame every obstacle, and a terrible scene of slaughter ensued, the very streets and gutters ran with blood, none were spared but some of the young men to grace the triumphal entry into Rome, and then to be consigned to slavery or to destruction in the amphitheatres. One million one hundred thousand persons perished in this the most terrible siege and slaughter that has ever been recorded. The temple and city were laid in ashes, the very walls were thrown down even with the ground, and their foundations dug up. With the exception of a few towers, Josephus says—"There was left nothing to make those who came thither believe it had ever been inhabited."

"Seest thou these great buildings," say the disciples to our Saviour thirty-eight years before this date, when they were resting on the side of the Mount of Olives about a mile distant from the temple, and in full view of the lofty wall rising up seven hundred feet from the valley below, and crowned with the temple structures, to which the startling reply is made—"There shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down."

One hundred years later the Emperor Hadrian dedicated a temple to Jupiter Capitolinus on the ruins, and thenceforth no Jew was permitted even to approach the site of his ancient and dearly loved temple.

I cannot perhaps close this paper more appropriately than by taking you back with me to the days of Solomon to witness one of those grand and imposing ceremonies, when the people gathered from all parts of the land to celebrate their annual festivals and to worship in the great temple. To the simple pastoral people it was the event of the year, and though the long journey which had to be performed on foot was attended with great fatigue, it was a joyful event, and was looked forward to with fond anticipations. Starting from their distant homes in families or groups of families, their humble beasts of burden bearing what simple utensils they required by the way, they would meet at the crossroads or villages with their acquaintances and kinsmen, with whom they were annually accustomed to make the journey, and each would relate the incidents of their own life story for the year, as little or no means of communication of any kind existed, mails telegraphs and railways being then two thousand years in the undiscovered future. And as they journeyed along the march would from time to time be enlivened by singing the new and beautiful psalms of David, such as "I joyed when they said let us go up to the house of our God. Let us worship at his throne." Or as they thought of the wild Arab robbers to whom they might be exposed, particularly by night, they could sing "He that keeps Israel slumbers not nor sleeps." And as they approached Jerusalem, coming down from the higher elevation of the Mount of Olives, and obtaining a magnificent view of the city and temple below them and just across the valley of Kedron, we can fancy their little group now swelled into the great caravan bursting out with rapture and pride. "Behold Jerusalem, the joy of the whole earth, walk about Zion, go round about her, tell the towers thereof, mark ye well her bulwarks and consider her palaces."

They pitch their tents outside the walls or obtain accommodation within, and we go up with them to one of the festivals, say to that of the great day of Atonement