

The Open Court

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Devoted to the Science of Religion, the Religion of Science, and the
Extension of the Religious Parliament Idea

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MAY, 1898.

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CHICAGO

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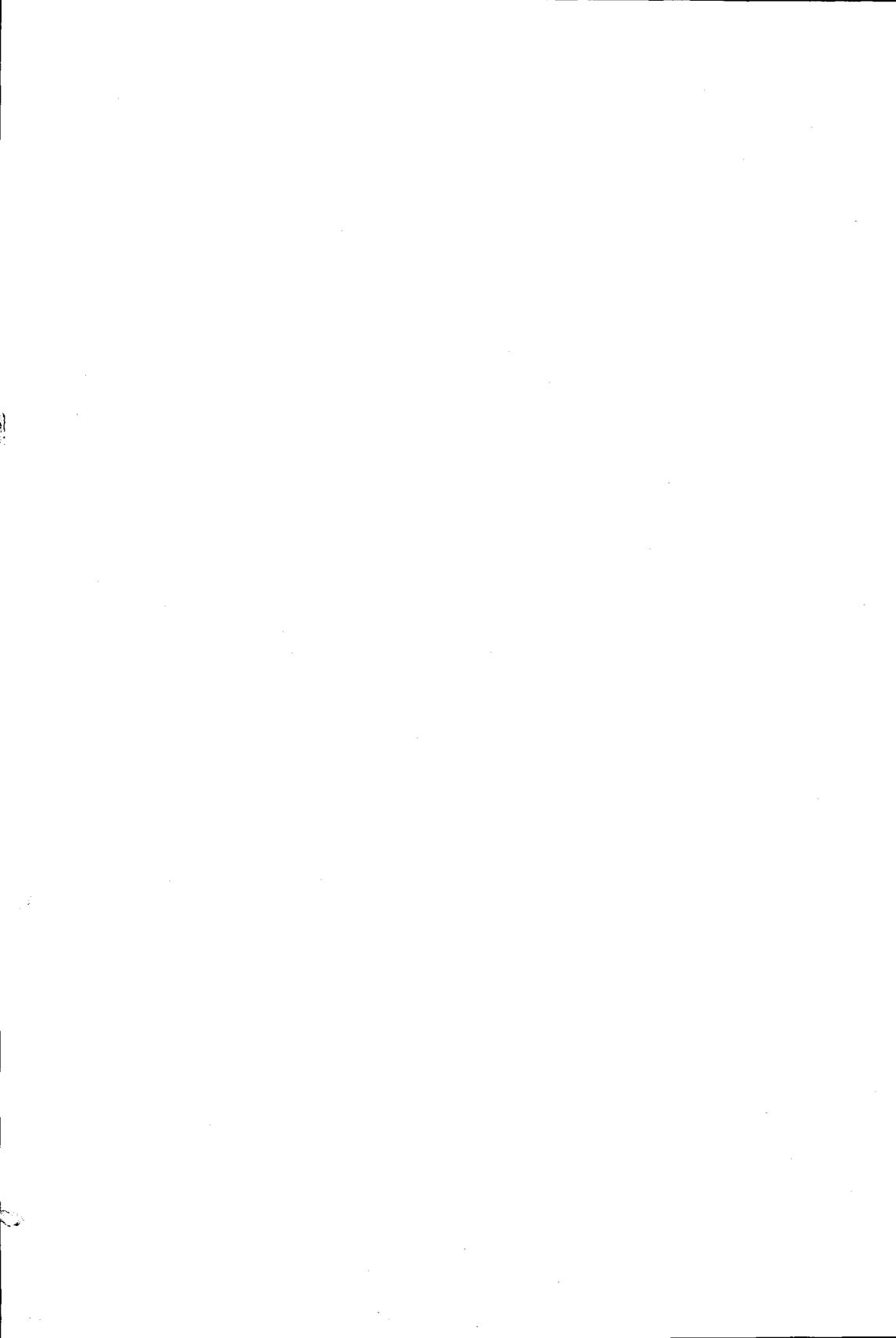
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LAO-TZE—THE OLD PHILOSOPHER.

After the Traditional Conception.

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HISTORY OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL.¹

FROM THE BEGINNING TO THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM.

BY PROF. C. H. CORNILL.

X.—The War in Judea and Destruction of Jerusalem.

WE ARE ABOUT to view the final act of the terrible drama. Our inclinations would bid us turn away in mournful silence and close our eyes to the frightful things we shall behold; perhaps more shocking things have never happened on earth than in this last desperate life and death struggle of the people of Israel. But the duty of the historian compels us to look matters in the face, and, what is still sadder, it compels the spectator to act as judge. Even though our hearts should break over all this misery and suffering, there is no atoning feature: the genuine tragic sympathy is wanting. We behold only a mad riot of all the passions, which blindly assail one another; the most shocking deeds were committed by Jews against Jews, and the most victims fell not by the sword of the Romans, but by that of the infatuated nation itself. The most frightful terrors of the Thirty Years' War combined with the most frightful terrors of the French Revolution will come before our reluctant gaze. It seems as though all the fiends of hell were released in order to destroy the people to whom God had spoken aforetime often and in many different ways through his prophets. Scarcely on another occasion in history has the spectator the same feeling of irredeemable ruin, of inevitable destruction, as in the case of the fall of Jerusalem in the year 70 A. D.

¹ Translated from the manuscript of Prof. C. H. Cornill, by W. H. Carruth of the University of Kansas.

Eleazar, the son of the high priest Ananias, first becomes the leader of the war party. The stronghold Masada, built by Herod, was taken by a sudden assault, and in Jerusalem all preparations were made for the impending war. But there was still a strong peace party who foresaw certain ruin in a conflict with Rome, and even yet wanted peace at any price. They applied for assistance to King Agrippa, who actually sent them three thousand soldiers. The war party had their headquarters in the temple, which by its position is an almost impregnable fortress; the peace party in the citadel. Blood flowed daily, and civil war was raging in the streets of Jerusalem when the war party received reinforcements. Menahem, a grandson of the old rebel and Roman-hater, Judas the Galilean, broke open the arsenals of Masada and armed a large force of Sicarii, with whom he marched to Jerusalem. At this the peace party saw the impossibility of further opposition; the troops of Agrippa were allowed to depart, but the Roman cohort was expressly refused permission to do so. They took refuge in a particularly strong tower, while the leaders of the peace party concealed themselves. At their head stood the high priest Ananias; he was murdered, together with his brother, and the torch applied to his palace as well as to that of Agrippa and Berenice and the portion of the citadel already taken, in which were all the archives, including the tax accounts and the records of loans. This was on the 6th of September, 66 A. D. But scarcely had the war party obtained the upper hand in Jerusalem when Eleazar and Menahem began to make war on each other. The men of Jerusalem did not propose to accept commands from the foreign adventurer; Menahem and his troop were attacked in the temple and overpowered, he himself executed under torture and his troops massacred. Finally the Roman cohort also had to surrender. They were promised free retreat on the delivery of their arms; but scarcely had they actually laid them down when the Jews fell upon the defenceless men and butchered them to the last one. Only the tribune, Metilius, was so contemptible as to purchase his life by submitting to circumcision. Josephus calls especial attention to the fact that this incredible infamy was perpetrated on a Sabbath.

The fortresses of Cyprus and Machærus also fell into the hands of the Jews, so that very soon there was not a Roman left in the country.

Now the war extended into all quarters and assumed altogether the nature of a race-conflict: where the Jews were in the majority they massacred the heathen, and where the heathen were

in the majority the Jews met a like fate. Thus in Cæsarea alone more than twenty thousand Jews were slaughtered in one hour, in Damascus ten thousand, and in this connexion Josephus makes the characteristic observation that the heathen in Damascus must needs have kept this plan a close secret from their women, since the women were almost without exception proselytes.

At last the Syrian legate, Cestius Gallus, approached the scene, and marched directly upon Jerusalem; at Gibeon there was a battle in which the Jews fought heroically but could not prevent Gallus from marching to Jerusalem, taking and setting fire to a part of the city. Now the peace party, which still had numerous and influential secret adherents, wanted to surrender the city to the Romans; but this plan was betrayed, and all who had embraced it or even known of it were thrown over the temple walls before the very eyes of the Romans. Cestius perceived that he could accomplish nothing with his troops against the city and its desperate defenders, and accordingly withdrew. But on the retreat he was surrounded in the gorge of Beth-horon, and suffered a disastrous defeat. Only by sacrificing a small force did he succeed in saving at least the remainder of his troops, but the rest of the retreat was a wild flight: nearly all the arms and all of the engines of war belonging to the Romans fell into the hands of the Jews. The battle at Beth-horon was on the 8th of November, and the continuation of the war was prevented by the approach of winter.

After these occurrences of course all hope of a peaceful settlement was gone. Those who still did not wish war left Jerusalem, while in the city preparations were made with all energy for the impending crisis. The first requisite was seen to be the organisation of the opposition; accordingly commanders were appointed who were to draft and drill men in all the provinces, and in short make all ready for war with Rome.

It is a characteristic fact that those selected were without exception members of the nobility eligible to the high-priesthood: the historian Josephus was one of them. Thus far the movement has, in accordance with the inherent nature of the Jewish people, an aristocratic character; in Jerusalem the high priest Ananos and a certain Joseph, son of Gorion, are at the head of the whole. It is a tragic-comic thought to imagine these men who had never in their lives had a sword in their hands, and had done nothing but study the Thora, now suddenly transformed into generals and drill-masters with the task of creating an army equal to a contest with the Romans. Moreover a part of them had only half a heart in the

matter, and very likely had themselves no real confidence in their success.

Young Josephus, to whom the most difficult territory, Galilee, was assigned, was confronted at the very start with fierce opposition on the part of a popular hero, John of Gish-chala, who had taken part in the battle against Cestus at Beth-horon. He stirred up the people against the traitor and friend of the Romans, and would have killed him if Josephus had not managed to reach a boat at the right moment. In other places there were probably similar results, for people could not long fail to recognise that the whole affair was in the most incompetent hands conceivable, so patent was the incompetence.

The Romans proceeded very differently. The command was conferred upon the best general of his time, Vespasian, a veteran warrior and victor, and sixty thousand of the best Roman troops put at his disposal. Hostilities were begun by the Jews in the year 67 A. D. There was but a weak Roman garrison in Askalon. The Jews attacked the city twice, but were repelled with a total loss of eighteen thousand men.

At this point Vespasian appeared upon the scene of war. He clearly pursued the policy of localising the war in Jerusalem, first subjecting the country and then with his whole force crushing the city. To begin with he marched into Galilee, where Josephus was in command. The important border fortress, Sepphoris, surrendered to the Romans without drawing a sword. Josephus approached with his forces, but at the first sight of the Romans they dispersed without ever venturing a battle.

Now there remained in the province only a series of fortified cities and points to be taken. Josephus himself had withdrawn into the fortress of Josapata, the defence of which he narrates with complacent diffuseness; and in fact Vespasian required forty-seven days for its reduction, while more than forty thousand men lost their lives in the siege. Josephus managed to make his peace with the Romans, and was honorably received and well treated by Vespasian, whose future elevation to the office of emperor he claims to have foretold. At the same time the fortress of Japha fell, and fifteen thousand men lost their lives there. Some troops of fugitives had established themselves in the maritime city of Joppa, —they too perished miserably. Tiberias, in which the peace party was strong, surrendered to the Romans and was therefore spared.

The real home of the rebellion in Galilee was the city of Tarichæa, on the Sea of Genezareth; against it was sent Titus, the son

of Vespasian, who took it by a bold assault, by plunging into the lake with his cavalry and storming the city from the wholly unprotected water side. Vespasian now executed stern judgment. In the assault six thousand and five hundred people had perished; the old men and invalids who no longer had a value as human property he slew; from the remainder he picked out six thousand of the strongest and sent them to Nero at Corinth, where the latter was having a canal cut across the isthmus; all the rest, thirty thousand and four hundred in number, were sold into slavery.

There now remained in the hands of the Jews only Gamala, Gish-chala and Mount Tabor. Vespasian first advanced against Gamala. When King Agrippa summoned the city to surrender he was wounded by a sling, and then the attack began. The first assault of the Romans was repulsed with such enormous loss that Vespasian had to use his whole authority to maintain any kind of order. A regular siege was begun, and a second assault brought the city into the power of the Romans. Four thousand fell by the swords of the victors, more than five thousand had cast themselves down and been dashed to pieces on the rocks below; only two women remained alive of the whole population of the city.

Mount Tabor was taken through the perjury of the Roman commander, and Titus himself proceeded against Gish-chala. John, who was in command there, managed to elude Titus in the night, he slipped through the Roman lines with his forces and hastened to Jerusalem, while the city itself surrendered the following day. Thus all Galilee was in the hands of the Romans at the close of the autumn of the year 67 A. D.

It is easy to understand how these defeats stirred passions to the highest pitch. They were rightly ascribed to the wholly incompetent existing leadership, which was in no respect equal to its task. John of Gish-chala, especially, who had taken part in the war in Galilee, could not say enough of the shameful treason of the leaders. By degrees all those who had been fighting and murdering during the summer had gathered in Jerusalem, and now they could undertake to overthrow the party of the alleged traitors and friends of Rome, and bring the "Zealots" to the helm.

First a few of the foremost men were imprisoned and assassinated. In order to gain some sort of moral support the Zealots appointed a new high priest, an obscure and uneducated person named Phannias, chosen by lot,—he was to be the last to wear the sacred garment in Jerusalem. At this point two former high priests, Ananos and Jesus, placed themselves at the head of the

conservative portion of the people and roused them to energetic measures against the Zealots: once more actual civil war raged in Jerusalem until the party of order succeeded in getting into the temple. The Zealots would have been irretrievably lost if Ananos had not hesitated to desecrate the temple by battle and bloodshed; he contented himself with isolating the Zealots in the temple. Thereupon they called for help from without. The wild, marauding, semi-Jewish Idumeans were always ready for plunder and murder: twenty thousand reckless fellows responded to the call of the Zealots, whose request had been wrapped in a cloak of patriotism, alleging that Ananos and his party intended to deliver the city to the Romans. These Idumeans marched to Jerusalem, where of course the gates were shut against them. But in the night a storm arose, under the protection of which the Zealots succeeded in opening the gates to their allies; the rising sun looked upon eight thousand five hundred murdered victims.

Now they began to make a clean sweep of the traitors. The naked bodies of the two high priests, Ananos and Jesus, were thrown into the street horribly mutilated, and within a few days twelve thousand men of the party of order were executed amid terrible tortures. Even the comedy of a court was introduced. Once when this court ventured to acquit an especially venerated and respected man, two Zealots rushed upon him and thrust their daggers into his breast with the words: "Here hast thou our vote also."

But now it was growing too bad for even the Idumeans, who must have perceived for some time that the Zealots were merely cheating them and using them for their own lawless purposes; they released two thousand persons who had been imprisoned for execution, and left Jerusalem, where John of Gish-chala then instituted an unrestricted reign of terror; soon, as Josephus relates, all the respectable people in Jerusalem had fallen victims to—I had almost said, the guillotine; only those escaped death whom humble birth or poverty made already humble enough. The Zealots went so far as to forbid on penalty of death the burial of the bodies of those executed, which were left to rot in the sun. The Sicarii who occupied Masada carried on from that point marauding incursions throughout all Southern Judea, where they had their terrible will, pillaging and murdering whole villages and towns.

All this was known in the Roman headquarters, and the officers advised Vespasian to march forthwith upon Jerusalem and capture the city, which was wasting away in civil strife. But Ves-

pasian considered it more profitable to let the Jews destroy one another, and calmly continued his methodical warfare. In the spring of 68 A. D. he began by subduing the whole country east of the Jordan excepting the fortress of Machærus, where a generation before had fallen the head of John the Baptist, and then the South and West. He was just preparing for a decisive blow against Jerusalem when the news arrived of the death of Nero and the elevation of Galba. Vespasian sent his son Titus to the new emperor to receive his orders; but on the way Titus learned of the death of Galba also, and accordingly returned to his father. A whole year the Roman arms rested, but the unhappy people was destined to have no repose.

A certain Simon bar Giora succeeded in rising to power and authority among the Sicarii in Masada. Soon this fortress was too small for his ambition and he gathered great troops about him, whose number increased in a short time to twenty thousand men. The people of Jerusalem regarded this as a menace, and a battle resulted between Simon and John, in which the latter was defeated; but Simon felt too weak to attack Jerusalem and turned his attack upon Idumea. Soon his host had increased to forty thousand, who of course had to live, and accordingly wasted and pillaged the whole land unmercifully. At this point the Zealots by a treacherous attack succeeded in capturing Simon's wife and taking her to Jerusalem. Now Simon again marched to Jerusalem, killed with the most terrible tortures all whom he could seize, or sent them back to Jerusalem minus their hands, until finally they returned his wife to him.

Meantime in Jerusalem all the bonds of decency and order were loosed. The savage soldiery of John had complete control of the city, and soon ceased to obey John: they were no longer content with plunder and murder, but gave themselves up to the most shocking excesses. This prompted the desperate suggestion of driving out the devil by Beelzebub: a solemn deputation besought Simon bar Giora to free the city from the tyrant, and in April, 69, A. D. he entered the city, greeted with loud acclaim. John was shut up in the temple, but the attempt to take it was unsuccessful. Simon established himself in the city, and now Jerusalem had two tyrants instead of one, for Simon's sway was no less atrocious than that of John.

In June, 69 A. D., Vespasian resumed his activity and completed the conquest of the South; only Jerusalem, Herodeion, Masada, and Machærus, remained in the hands of the Jews. But now

the legions proclaimed their commander emperor. Of course this was a more important matter for Vespasian than the war in Judea ; therefore he turned this over to his son Titus and set out for Rome by the way of Alexandria ; Josephus, his prophecy having been thus fulfilled, was released from his chains, and, together with Tiberius Alexander, the sole remaining Jewish procurator, he was the chief adviser of Titus at the siege of Jerusalem.

Meantime in Jerusalem the mutual destruction and anarchy had progressed. Even in the ranks of the Zealots the dissatisfaction with the tyrannical and cruel rule of John was growing strong. A certain Eleazar, son of Simon, who at the very beginning of the war had won distinction by the great victory over Cestius Gallus at Beth-horon, but had since been pushed aside by the patrician party and entrusted with no office, now made use of this dissatisfaction. He formed a new faction among the Zealots which made fierce war upon John, and finally got possession of the temple itself. Thus there were now three camps in the wretched city : Simon held the city, John the mount of the temple, and Eleazar the temple itself, so that John was now beset from two sides. In the course of this constant civil war all the immense stores of grain within the city went up in smoke. In the language of Josephus, these three were united only in murdering those who deserved to live longer, and they outdid themselves in the torture and cruel execution of their enemies.

Finally, in the spring of the year 70, Titus marched upon Jerusalem, arriving shortly before the Paschal celebration. As Titus, with six hundred horsemen, was making a reconnoissance about Jerusalem, he came very near being captured and his troop just escaped annihilation ; with a few supporters left he managed to cut his way through. The next day they began to make camp, the tenth legion occupying the Mount of Olives. But as they were going at the work the Jews made a sortie in force, which was executed with such daring spirit that the legion dashed up the Mount in wild flight : only by the personal action of Titus was it possible to check them and save the honor of the day.

But not even yet did the civil war within the walls of Jerusalem cease. Eleazar had opened the temple to worshippers : those who wished to offer sacrifice were admitted after close inspection by Eleazar's guards. On account of the great number of pilgrims at the feast of Pascha this inspection could not of course be thorough ; John took advantage of this fact and had the most daring of his followers slip into the temple ; here they attacked Eleazar,

and finally, with the shedding of streams of blood, captured the temple. Now once more there were but two parties in Jerusalem and John was in control of the entire temple. Josephus reports the number of able bodied defenders of Jerusalem at twenty-three thousand four hundred all told.

Now Titus moved his lines nearer to the city, and was again met with a sortie which caused his troops to waver and led to a retreat. Every prospect of taking Jerusalem by storm being thus excluded, a systematic siege was begun on the 23d of April; soon the engines were constructed and the battering ram began its dismal activity against the outer walls. Only now, amid the dull thuds of the battering-ram, did internecine war cease, and Simon and John joined forces to combat the enemy from without. The first united sortie was made with such violence that they succeeded in setting fire to the Roman works; the entire destruction of the badly damaged works was prevented only by the personal participation of Titus, who with his own hands struck down twelve Jews. The one Jew who was taken alive was crucified in sight of the walls.

On the 7th of May the Romans had effected a breach in the outer wall, the Jews withdrew behind the second, and the Romans were masters of the New City. Five days later, on the 12th of May, the second wall also was stormed, and Titus was one of the first to force an entrance; but now there arose such a desperate hand-to-hand struggle that the Romans were finally forced out. For four days the Jewish defenders covered the breach with their bodies; then their resistance weakened, and the Romans again entered on the 16th of May, and now held their own in the suburb and razed the second wall.

Already the defenders were short of provisions and people were dying of hunger in Jerusalem, but no one thought of surrender; the resistance only became the more stubborn and desperate. Once more Titus tried peaceful measures. The troops were about to be paid, and Titus commanded them all to appear in parade uniform at a point visible from the city. In fact all Jerusalem hastened to the roofs and walls to enjoy the rare military spectacle. But if Titus had expected thus to intimidate the besieged he had miscalculated. When Josephus was sent out to summon them to surrender he was met with abuse and missiles.

In the city, meantime, famine was increasing. In order to provision the troops soldiers were sent into the houses to search for food; where they brought nothing to light the unhappy occu-

pants were put to terrible tortures in order, by indescribably exquisite torment, to force from them a confession of their hidden stores. Driven to desperation by this, the people sought the mercy of the Romans. They stole out of the city; but Titus had all the deserters, as many as five hundred in one day, crucified after inhuman tortures, and when, as Josephus says, crosses enough could not be obtained, he cut off their hands and drove them back into the city, where Simon and John were competing in the work of hunting down traitors and friends of the Romans in order to reduce the number of superfluous mouths to be fed.

On the 29th of May the Romans had moved four ramparts up against the inner wall. John succeeded in destroying two of these by digging mines beneath, supported by timbers, and then burning the timbers; the other two were burned by Simon two days later. Thus the laborious achievement of weeks was undone, and matters were just where they had been before. Now the Romans held a council of war, the conclusion of which was that, the engines being destroyed, famine should be left to complete the work of destruction. Titus had a wall with thirteen watch-towers built around the entire city, thus to make a complete blockade: the Romans are reported to have built this wall of more than three miles in length in three days.

I pass over the scenes of horror that follow: suffice it to say that, according to the declaration of a captive taken by the Romans, whose business it was to count the dead in order to pay from the public treasury the burial fee, there were carried out through one gate under his charge one hundred and fifteen thousand eight hundred and eighty corpses, in the period from April 14 to July 1, that is, in two and a half months. Unfortunately the beginning of the siege had fallen in the Paschal week, so that all the pilgrims from without were shut up in the city.

Now Titus's humanity was touched, and he permitted the Romans to receive fugitives; the starved wretches were even cared for—to be sold afterwards as slaves, of course. But it came to light that one of these unfortunates had swallowed a few gold pieces, his last possession, and from that time on the Syrian and Arabian troops ripped open the bodies of the fugitives and tore out their bowels in order to hunt for gold. In this brutal fashion two thousand were slaughtered in one night. Titus learned of the monstrous deed, but could not punish it because there were too many implicated in it; despite his severest prohibition the abominable performance was continued, only more secretly and more cautiously

—and so at last it seemed preferable to starve in Jerusalem than to perish thus.

Now Titus undertook to restore the ramparts that had been destroyed. The whole region for ten miles around was stripped of timber, and after untold labor the ramparts were completed at the expiration of twenty-one days. This time everything was hazarded. If these structures were destroyed the Romans could not renew them because of the entire lack of timber; on the other hand the city was lost if it did not succeed in destroying them. On the 1st of July the Jews made a desperate sortie under John; but the Romans had learned wisdom from the previous sorties, while as a matter of course the strength of the Jews, who were emaciated by famine, was less. The sortie was repulsed, and in the following night the inner wall fell under the blows of the battering-ram; but to their astonishment and dismay the Romans found back of this a new one; John had anticipated the case and made his arrangements accordingly. After repeated failures this new temporary wall was scaled on the 5th of July, and the Romans poured in. In the confusion Titus undertook to storm the temple forthwith, but met there such desperate resistance that he retreated; however, the Lower City remained in his possession, and he proceeded to raze the last wall and prepare for a regular assault upon the temple. Wood had to be fetched from twelve miles away, but the Romans, despite all obstacles, pushed their work persistently and once more the ramparts rose from the earth.

On the 17th of July the daily morning and evening sacrifice in the temple was finally suspended. We are filled with a feeling of shuddering admiration when we read this report. For three months the most terrible famine had prevailed; thousands and hundreds of thousands had succumbed to it, and yet day after day they burned upon the altar the sacrificial animals prescribed by the law, and only a short time before had John ventured to touch the stores of sacred wine and sacred oil and distribute them among the starving people.

Titus having once more made through Josephus a fruitless demand for surrender, fighting still continued about the temple and with incomparable bravery on both sides. Once more, on the 27th of July, the Jews were able to inflict heavy losses on the Romans. They filled the west porch of the temple with combustibles and lured the Romans thither by a sham retreat; then it was fired, and the whole force of Roman soldiers perished miser-

ably in the flames before the very eyes of their comrades, who were unable to succor them.

On the 8th of August the ramparts were at last finished and the battering-ram began to operate; but it was ineffective against the massive foundations of the temple. The scaling-ladders were run up for an assault, but in this attempt the Romans even lost several standards without accomplishing anything. Then another method was tried. Next day the Romans set fire to the gates. Titus had the fire put out in the night and the final assault was to be made on the 10th of August.

Titus had given strict orders to spare the temple, but after the Jews had twice in succession made desperate attacks upon the assailants the Romans lost patience. To hasten matters a soldier hurled a torch through an open window into the temple building proper, which straightway burst forth in flames. Titus galloped up to check the work of destruction, but even the iron discipline of the Romans weakened in the fire of passions roused to madness. There was no stopping them. More and more torches and firebrands flew into the temple, within whose walls Romans and Jews were fighting for life breast to breast in inextricable confusion. With the crackling of the darting flames and the crash of falling timbers were mingled the heartrending screams of the dying and the triumphant yells of the victorious Romans.

Titus had barely time to secure the sacred vessels of the temple and to enter the Holy of Holies; then the temple of the God of Israel went down never to rise again. Upon its smoking ruins the legions hailed the son of their emperor as "imperator" and offered a sacrifice to the Roman Jupiter. Then fire and murder resumed their sway. The conflagration became general, neither age nor sex was spared. The priests had succeeded in hiding themselves; on the fifth day, driven by hunger, they came forth and begged for their lives, but Titus replied: "It is fitting for priests to perish with their temple," and had them beheaded.

But not even yet was Jerusalem subdued. Simon still held the Upper City, and John too had been able to make his way thither with the remnants of his troops. They asked for a conference, and Titus consented. He with his troops was on the east side of the Tyropōon valley, Simon and John, surrounded by the Jews, on the west side. They said they had sworn never to surrender to the Romans, and begged therefore for permission to withdraw, promising to leave the country. Titus felt unable to permit this and now the formal siege of the Upper City began.

Not even now were passions subdued. Simon and John still fought each other, and suspected Roman sympathisers and traitors were still being killed. Josephus gives the number of such at eight thousand four hundred. With incalculable labor and difficulty the Romans began on the 20th of August the erection of ramparts against the Upper City; on the 7th of September they were completed and the engines were moved up; the worn-out defenders were no longer able to offer resistance, and with a rush the walls were scaled. The Romans, grown suspicious, feared a ruse; but they were soon convinced that all that were left in the city were dead or nearly so. Simon and John, with their last troops, had hidden in subterranean passages; Jerusalem was finally and completely conquered. Everywhere fire was set, the houses having first been plundered and the occupants murdered: on the 8th of September the rising sun shone down upon what was no longer a city—the smouldering ruins of Jerusalem. Only three towers were left standing as memorials of the prowess of the Romans in the conquest, together with a part of the wall to shelter the garrison that was left to guard the ruins. Aside from this the city was so nearly levelled to the ground that, as Josephus said, no one who visited the place would have believed that a city ever stood there.

Driven by hunger, John came forth from his hiding place and begged for mercy; Titus put him into heavy chains and let him live. In Rome he perished forsaken in prison. Simon tried to escape by an underground passage, but failing in this he suddenly appeared rising out of the earth like a spectre in a white garment with a purple cloak on the spot where the temple had stood. But the Roman guards seized him; confessing his identity, he also was cast into chains.

The total number of those who perished in the siege and capture of Jerusalem is estimated by Josephus at one million one hundred thousand persons; ninety-seven thousand were taken captive by the Romans. Of these, seven hundred of the finest and strongest were selected to grace the triumphal procession of Titus. The old and the weak, who could not be used, the Romans had butchered in cold blood; those over seventeen years of age were part of them sent into the Egyptian mines, part of them forced to appear in battle with wild beasts and be torn to pieces by them, or to fight as gladiators with one another to delight the eyes of the heathen populace. In Cæsarea Philippi alone, at the celebration of the birthday of Domitian, more than two thousand five hundred Jews

shed their blood in the arena. The males under seventeen years of age and the women were sold directly into slavery. Titus, with all his prisoners and all his booty, marched to Rome, where he had a brilliant triumph in the year 71 A. D.; the sacred vessels of the temple were carried before the "Imperator" and Simon and John, for the first time shoulder to shoulder, were obliged to march before the chariot of the victor with the seven hundred chosen captives. Simon, being the real leader, was first scourged and then throttled at the stake, in accordance with Roman custom; John finished his career in prison.

But although Titus had thus celebrated his triumph, Judea was not yet wholly subdued. The three fortresses Herodeion, Machærus, and Masada, still stood unconquered, held by all that were left of the rebels. The legate Lacilius Bassus was commissioned to complete the pacification of the country. Herodeion seems to have surrendered immediately, but Machærus, trusting to its exceptionally strong position, took the risk of a siege. Both sides fought with the greatest bravery and desperation, a certain noble youth named Eleazar distinguished himself particularly among the Jews; but in a sortie he advanced too far and was captured by the Romans. Bassus had him scourged in sight of the besieged and erected a cross as though to crucify him; at this the garrison promised to surrender the fortress in return for the liberty of Eleazar and free retreat for themselves. Of course Bassus accepted these terms and actually kept them, but the inhabitants of the city were partly slaughtered and partly sold into slavery. The retiring garrison united with various stragglers who had succeeded in escaping from the underground passages of Jerusalem and found a hiding-place in the forests east of the Jordan; Bassus had the whole region surrounded by cavalry and then cut down the forests, so that every man of them perished, three thousand in number.

Now only Masada was left. Here Eleazar was in command, a descendant of Judas the Galilean and a near kinsman of that Menahem who had fought in Jerusalem as leader of the Sicarii. Eleazar too had fought under his banner, but when disaster befell Menahem he had been able to escape from Jerusalem and take refuge in Masada. By its location the place was almost impregnable. Flavius Silva, now commanding in place of Lacilius Bassus, who had died meanwhile, had a wall built about the whole place to make the escape of the garrison impossible; then with tremendous exertion he built a rampart at the only vulnerable spot, and thereupon had the engines approach the walls. They succeeded in de-

stroying the wall; but behind it Eleazar had constructed a new one of wood and earth, against which the battering-ram was powerless. Accordingly they tried fire against the new wall, and the whole wooden structure went up in flames. This sealed the fate of Masada. The assault was planned for the next day, and the watchfulness of the guards was doubled in the intervening night in order that no victim might escape. That night,—it was the night of Pascha—Eleazar took a desperate resolution. Nobody should fall into the hands of the Romans; all preferred death to captivity. Ten were selected by lot who were to kill all the others, and of these ten one, who in turn should first kill the other nine and finally himself. The horrible plan was actually carried out. The sole survivor went about once more to all the corpses to make sure that no life was left. When he was convinced of this he hurled the torch into the house and thrust his sword into his own breast. Only an old woman and a mother with five children had hidden themselves in an aqueduct. Nine hundred and sixty corpses covered the ground which they could no longer defend.

The next morning when the Romans advanced they were met with a deathlike silence; they suspected a ruse and raised a loud battle-cry. Then the seven survivors came forth and told the Romans what had happened. On the 15th of Nisam, i. e., of April, in the year 73 A. D., the first day of the Easter festival, the same day on which, according to tradition, the God of Israel had led his people out of Egyptian bondage into freedom, the last bulwark of Israel's liberty had fallen, and Israel was delivered into Roman bondage. Fifty years later, indeed, it made once more an attempt to conquer its freedom from Rome with the sword, but God had decreed otherwise: this attempt led only to more wretched slavery. Israel as a people, as a nation, was dead, and was destined to remain dead.

Rome was rude and heartless in letting the conquered nation feel the *vox victis*. Innumerable are the medals and memorial coins of the three Flavian emperors: Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian, on the obverse of which appears beneath a palm-tree a woman sitting on the ground in inconsolable grief, with the legend, "Conquered Judea." The whole country became a Roman province, and the soil was declared the personal property of the Emperor; perhaps no provision seemed to the Jews so much like bitter mockery as this, that they were now compelled to pay to the imperial treasury and deliver upon the Capitol the tithes which formerly, in accordance with the law, they had paid annually to the temple; the Capitoline Jupiter was to take the place of the God of Israel. As

a picture which touches the depths of the heart, I quote a passage from a Jewish writing composed under the fresh impression of these awful blows of fate :

“Well for him that is unborn, or who, if born, has died. But woe to us who live, that we must see the afflictions of Judah and the fate of Jerusalem. Arise and prepare to lament, begin to mourn with me and lament along with me. Ye husbandmen, scatter seed no more, and thou earth, why givest thou thy fruit? Keep back the sweetness of thy nourishment. Thou grape, why givest thou still thy wine when it shall no longer be offered in Zion and no firstlings be sacrificed? And thou heaven, withhold thy dew, neither open the storehouses of the rain. And thou sun, hold back thy shining light, and thou moon, quench thy clear beams ; for to what end shall any longer lights arise after the light of Zion is sunken in darkness? And ye young men, go not into the bridal-chamber, and ye virgins, deck not yourselves with bridal wreaths, and ye wives, pray not to become mothers ; for the barren shall rejoice, and those who have no children be glad ; and those who have children shall lament. For wherefore shall they bring forth with pain and bury with groans? Wherefore shall they have sons henceforth, and their names be kept alive, when the mother of all is desolate and her children dragged into bondage? Therefore speak no more of ornaments, neither think how ye shall deck yourselves. But ye priests, take the keys of the sanctuary and cast them up to heaven, giving them back to God, and say : Do Thou guard Thy house, we could not do it ! And ye maidens who weave byssus and silk with the gold of Ophir, take it all swiftly and cast it into the fire, that the fire may give it back to Him that made it, and the enemy obtain it not. Our fathers rest without griefs, and the righteous slumber in the earth in peace : for they know nothing of this distress and have not heard of the fate that is come upon us. O that thou haddest ears, thou earth, and thou a mouth, thou dust, to go and proclaim it in the under world and say to the dead : Blessed are ye above us who still live.”

Our eyes fill with tears as we see the curtain go down upon all this misery and woe. The tragedy is over. We are at the end of the History of Israel. Dreadful as this end has been, we cannot refuse our admiration. The Jewish people fell like a man and a hero, and even in its fall it triumphed over the victor. All-powerful Rome could destroy Israel but not pervert it. Israel did not give way to Rome to the extent of even a single thought ; it remained what it was, and all its misfortunes served only to confirm and

strengthen it in its essential character. While Rome has long since passed away, and only ruins tell us of its glory, Israel is still, after two thousand years, what it was. It has survived all the vicissitudes of history, all the changes of ages, ever consistent, comparable in the life of nations to one of those erratic boulders, which wear out the tooth of time and mock at eternity, a strange yet imposing spectacle, a living witness of long-vanished millenniums.

Indeed, in a certain sense we may say that Israel has become the heir of Rome. To this day there stands in Rome the arch of Titus with the sculptured representation of the sacred vessels of the temple at Jerusalem, which were carried before the wondering eyes of the Roman populace in that triumphal procession; this arch tells us still in its mighty stone language what happened at Jerusalem eighteen hundred years ago. But what a change in Rome itself! When the glory of the Cæsars had fallen into the dust and Rome had become a provincial city, there arose in Rome a new universal dominion, a dominion so powerful and extensive that even the empire of the ancient Roman emperors grows pale in comparison. And the wielder of this new Roman dominion was the man with the triple crown, the successor of the Jewish high priest. The new spiritual power, which originated on Jewish soil, has overcome the whole world and triumphed over Rome. To it even Rome was compelled to bow, confessing the supremacy of Jerusalem. For empire passes away, but the spirit endures. It is the only imperishable thing on earth and in history.