

## The Sieges of Jerusalem.

THE joyful news of General Allenby's capture of Jerusalem recalls the fact, which few but students are acquainted with, that the Holy City has been subjected to the vicissitudes of war more frequently than any other city of the world. This enables us to realize not only that it is a sacred spot, revered alike by Jew, Christian and Mohammedan, but also that the possession of it has ever been regarded as of the greatest importance politically, militarily and religiously. In *Our Work in Palestine*,<sup>1</sup> the Palestine Exploration Fund enumerate no less than twenty-seven sieges or captures of the city; so General Allenby's is the twenty-eighth time that the place has been attacked.

But there has been a great difference between former captures and the last. Former sieges have been so destructive that the present level of the modern city is several feet above the level of the site of the ancient city; and we read that "There is not a stone in the city but has been reddened with human blood; not a spot but where some hand-to-hand conflict has taken place; not an old wall but has echoed back the shrieks of despairing women."<sup>2</sup>

At the recent capture of the city, however, so far as we can learn, there has been no blood shed, nor a stone disturbed. In Sir E. Allenby's "Historic Message" he expressly declares that—

"Every sacred building, monument, holy spot, shrine, traditional site, endowment, pious bequest, or customary place of prayer, of whatever form, of the three religions, will be maintained and protected according to the existing customs and beliefs of those to whose faiths they are sacred."

The following is a list of the various sieges of Jerusalem referred to in *Our Work in Palestine*:—

1. Capture of the lower city by Judah, about B.C. 1400 (700 years before the traditional date of the foundation of Rome)—(Judges i. 8).

2. Capture of the upper city by David, about 400 years later (2 Sam. v.).

<sup>1</sup> *Our Work in Palestine*, Pal. Exp. Fund, 1873, pp. 48-67.

<sup>2</sup> *Jerusalem*, W. Besant and G. H. Palmer, p. 2..

3. Surrendered to Shishak, King of Egypt, some years after Solomon's death (2 Chron. xii. 9).

4. About B.C. 887 Judah was invaded by Philistines and Arabians, who "carried away all the substance that was found in the king's house" (2 Chron. xxx. 16-17).

5. Capture by Jehoash, King of Israel, who broke down 400 cubits' length of the walls (2 Kings xiv. 13, 14).

6. The confederate kings of Syria and Israel besieged the city, but apparently unsuccessfully (2 Chron. xxviii.).

7. The Assyrians attacked the city in Hezekiah's reign, but it escaped conquest (2 Chron. xxxii.).

8. Nebuchadnezzar besieged and captured it, partly pillaging the Temple (2 Chron. xxxvi. 6-8).

9. Nebuchadnezzar's army, in the following reign of Jehoiachin, captured and despoiled the city, carrying away to Babylon the remaining treasures and 10,000 of the people (2 Chron. xxxvi. 10).

10. Captured by the Assyrians about B.C. 586, after a siege of eighteen months, the city, its walls and the Temple being destroyed, the ruins being left untouched for fifty years; the people who remained in the land being taken to Babylon (2 Chron. xxxvi. 17-20).

11. Ptolemy Soter captured it, carrying away to Egypt a great number of Jews from Jerusalem and Samaria.

12. In B.C. 203 it was taken by Antiochus the Great.

13. Four years later it was captured by Scopas, the Alexandrian General, who left a garrison in the place.

14. The fourteenth siege was by Antiochus Epiphanes in B.C. 168, when more destruction was wrought on the city than it had experienced since the Assyrian invasion 500 years before.

15. Antiochus again laid siege to the city, and partially destroyed its walls.

16. Antiochus Sidetes, King of Syria, besieged it in B.C. 135; but it was raised on making terms with Antiochus.

17. In B.C. 105 quarrels between the two brothers, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, led to the seventeenth siege, which was raised by one of Pompey's lieutenants.

18. Pompey invaded the city in B.C. 63, slaying 12,000 of the defenders.

19. Herod the Great, in B.C. 39, took the city after five months' siege.

20. In A.D. 70 Titus commenced the siege of Jerusalem, which resulted in the destruction of the city and the Temple, after untold horrors suffered by the Jews from famine, pestilence and the sword.

21. The next siege was in the reign of Hadrian, in the year 135, after which all traces of the city were obliterated.

22. In A.D. 614 the Persian king Chosroes conquered the city, massacring many thousands of monks, and destroying the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

23. Caliph Omar captured the city in 636, when it became to Moslems the most sacred place in the world, next to Mecca.

24. In 1098 it was besieged by Afdal, the Vizier of the Caliph of Egypt.

25. The first Crusaders captured Jerusalem in 1099, which led to its becoming a Christian city for a time ; but on—

26. Its capture by Saladin in 1187, after a siege of seven weeks, it reverted to the Mohammedans once more.

27. The twenty-seventh siege was in 1244, by Kharezmians, a wild horde of Tartars, who a few years later were driven out of the country, and Jerusalem fell under Turkish or Egyptian domination, which has continued until the present time.

28. The capture of the city by General Sir E. Allenby, his official entry into Jerusalem on Dec. 10, and the issue of his proclamation brings the Turkish misrule to a final end, brings peace nearer among the nations now at war, and fulfils the predictions of Holy Scripture.

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