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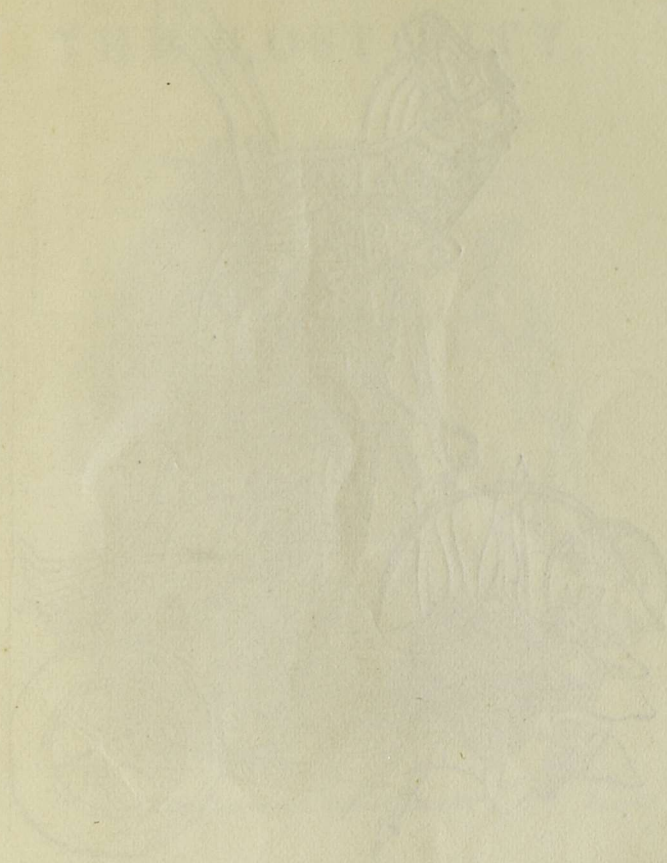
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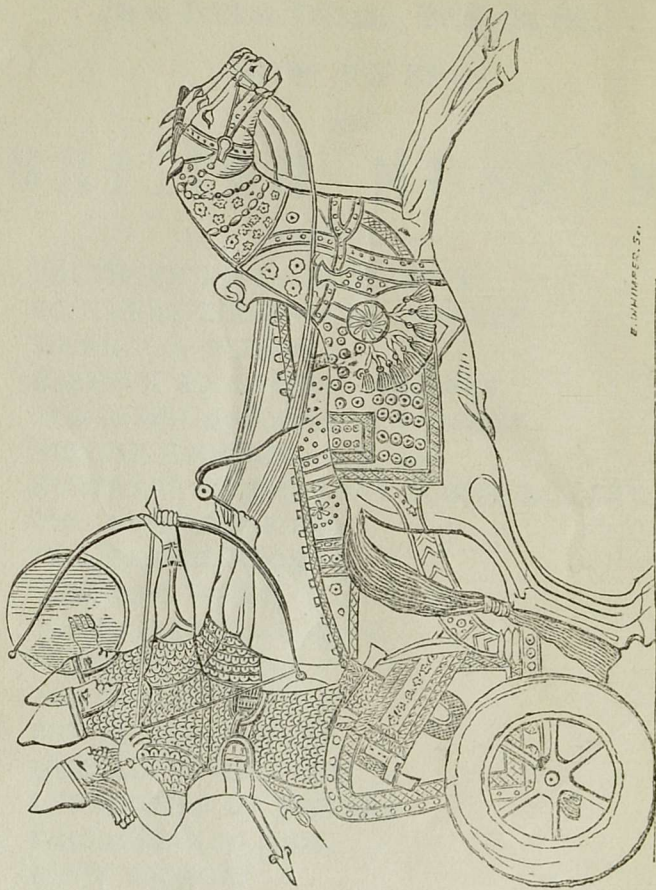
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WINKLNER, S.

THE PROPHEET
AND
THE LOST CITY.



"They have found Nimrod himself!"

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London:
GROOMBRIDGE AND SONS,
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THE PROPHET,

AND THE LOST CITY.

PART I.

THE PROPHET.

DAVID, the pious king of Israel, was dead ; and Solomon, his son, so renowned for his wisdom and his wealth, had also passed away. Other kings, less good and powerful, had succeeded, and much trouble had fallen on the Jewish nation. Revolt and strife had come among them, and caused a separation of the twelve tribes into two kingdoms ; and, when weakened by their divisions, other nations more powerful than they had come from afar to invade them, sometimes making them pay tribute, and at other times carrying away captive part of the people. All this led to many of the subjects of their idolatrous conquerors settling in the land, who set up idols, and inclined many of the Israelites to bow down to them and worship them. But God was not willing that the knowledge of his name should be lost from among his chosen people ; and, while he punished them for their disobedience and wickedness, he also sent among them from time to time prophets, or holy men, who, by their warnings and teachings, kept up the knowledge and worship of the one true God, the great Creator of the world, and the Father of mankind.

Now, one of the earliest of these prophets was

Jonah, whose singular history forms one of the Books of the Old Testament.

We read there of his being commanded by God to go to a far distant city, to prophecy to the people the punishment of their idolatry and wickedness—to the city of Nineveh, the capital of the great kingdom of Assyria, the very country whose kings had so frequently invaded the land of Israel, so that its power and greatness were well known. We read of how Jonah disobeyed that command, unwilling, perhaps, to undertake a long and perilous journey across the desert, and to venture among a people who were at enmity with his own country, and who would not be likely to pay the heed and respect to his words that he had been accustomed to in the land of Israel. For what purpose it was that Jonah determined to go in a contrary direction, we know not ; but it is told, that instead of journeying by land to the east, he took shipping at the port of Joppa, and set sail upon the Mediterranean sea in a vessel going to Tarshish. But disobedience to the commands of God was to be punished, even in one of his prophets. We read of how a storm arose, and how the lives of all were in jeopardy, so that the sailors threw their merchandize into the sea to lighten the vessel, and cried each to his god for mercy. Jonah meantime slept in the lower part of the ship, unmindful of the storm ; and the master of the vessel went to him and reproved him for thus sleeping in the time of danger, and desired him to call upon his God if he thought he would save him. Now it was a common notion among the sailors of ancient times, that an extraordinary storm must be attributed to the indignation of one of their gods against some guilty person on board their ship ; and casting lots on this occasion to find for whose cause this evil had come upon them, the lot fell upon Jonah.

“Then said they unto him, Tell us, we pray thee,

for whose cause this evil is upon us? What is thine occupation? What is thy country? Of what people art thou?"

And Jonah replied, "I am a Hebrew, and I fear the Lord—the God of heaven, which hath made both sea and the dry land." And he told them also how that he fled from the commands of the Lord, so that they said unto him, "What shall we do unto thee that the sea may be calm unto us?" for the sea grew more and more tempestuous. Conscious of his disobedience and want of faith, it was then that Jonah desired them to cast him into the sea, "for," said he, "so shall the sea be calm unto you, for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you."

It would seem, however, that yet another attempt was made by the sailors to reach the land, but that the violence of the tempest threw them back, so that at last, while the prophet was praying that they might not be punished on his account, they took him up and cast him into the sea,—and from that moment the sea ceased from her raging.

The prayers and repentance of Jonah were, however, heard by the Lord, who, preparing a great fish to swallow the prophet, he was by this means saved from death, and cast upon the dry land.

"Again the word of the Lord came unto Jonah a second time, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee. And Jonah arose and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord."

We have said that Nineveh was the capital of Assyria, a vast empire or kingdom stretching far away to the east, and lying north of the great empire of Chaldea, of which the great capital was Babylon. No countries of the world in the present day are perhaps equal in greatness and power to these two great empires of antiquity, when we

compare them with the state of the rest of the world at that time. The historians of Greece and Rome wrote of the magnificence of their cities, and told what was known in their days of the past power and splendour of their kings. They described the great city of Nineveh as being so large that it would take three days to travel round it, since its walls enclosed a space sixty miles in circumference ; and in the Bible it is also thus described, as " an exceeding great city of three days' journey." Within the walls was space for the grazing of flocks and herds, together with orchards and gardens ; and nothing could exceed the beauty and splendour of the palaces of the kings and the temples of their idols, whilst the prophet Nahum, in the Bible, says that there was no end of the stores of gold and silver and " pleasant furniture."

The city of Nineveh was built on the banks of the Tigris, a great river, which, rising in the north-west of Asia, flows down to the Persian Gulf, and between it and the land of Israel lay another yet wider river, the Euphrates, on which stood Babylon.

What wonder that faith and courage should be needed to Jonah for setting forth in quest of this great and distant city, against whose wickedness, whose rioting, and feasting and superstitious worship of idols, his single voice was to be raised ! But strengthened in heart by his late miraculous preservation, and made submissive by the rebuke which his disobedience had received, the prophet " went forth."

It is not easy in these days of rapid travelling, to picture to ourselves all the trials and privations which a long journey by land must have occasioned at that time. The route from the land of Israel to Nineveh would pass across a vast extent of desert country, upon which only at long intervals tracts of more fertile land were to be found, while the few

towns and villages which lay in the way were perhaps hundreds of miles apart. Beneath a scorching sun the traveller, even in these days, must cross the desert either on the back of a camel or mule, or walk on foot. Wild tribes of Arabs, ready to plunder the unprotected traveller, are constantly to be met with, so that it is only in large parties that people can venture to start on a journey; and so it was probably in the time of Jonah.

We are not told in the Bible of the manner in which the prophet journeyed, but it is most likely that he too joined some other party of travellers who were setting out at that time for the east. It may be that some merchants from the neighbouring city of Tyre, on the coast of Syria, were going to Nineveh, to carry there for the garments of the king some of the rich purple stuffs for which their city was famous, or to take for his diadems, pearls fished up from the depths of the Mediterranean sea; or, it may be, that some of the wood of the far-famed cedars of Lebanon was to be transported across the desert on the backs of camels and dromedaries for the fittings-up or roofs of the royal palaces; while in exchange, the merchants would perhaps bring back with them the gold and silver and precious stones of the still more distant east. In such a company of travellers, called in the present day a *caravan*, it is likely that the prophet found protection for his long and perilous journey; but how different must have been the thoughts and feelings of his mind from those of his companions! How different the object of his journey! After passing safely through the dangers of the desert, climbing high mountains, and crossing the two great rivers which lay in their way, what must have been the feelings of Jonah as they drew near the great city to which he was to bear the fearful announcement that its destruction was near at hand! It is told by ancient historians that the walls of Nineveh were no less than

a hundred feet high,—that chariots, three abreast, could be driven upon them, and that they were furnished with not fewer than fifteen hundred towers for the defence of the city. And to this strongly fortified place, within which no doubt was also a strong army for its protection, was the aged prophet to foretel certain and speedy destruction. Passing into the midst of the vast city, “a day’s journey,”—by which is meant about twenty miles,—and selecting probably some open space, or some public place in which were assembled many of the inhabitants, Jonah proclaimed aloud, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.”

Even in the midst of their pride and strength, their feasting and riotous living, it would seem that the announcement of the Hebrew prophet had a startling and alarming effect. We are told that the people “believed God,” and that, struck with repentance, they fasted, and put on sackcloth, “from the greatest to the least of them.” That even the king arose from his throne, and put off his robes, and covering himself with sackcloth, sat in ashes—for this was in those days the outward sign of deep repentance and humiliation. And the king caused also to be proclaimed and published, through Nineveh, a decree, saying, “Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor taste water: but let every man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?”

And it was so, as the king had hoped; for when “God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way,” he forgave them, “and did not the evil that he had said he would do unto them.”

And how was it with the prophet who had foretold

the destruction of the city, on finding that that doom was for the time averted—when, after the lapse of forty days, the city still remained unharmed within its walls? It is told, alas! that he repined at the mercy which God had shown to the idolatrous city, and that, finding his own words were not brought to pass, he was “displeased exceedingly, and he was very angry.” In his anger, he cried unto God, and said, “that when he fled unto Tarshish, it was because he doubted that God would fulfil the prophecy that he had commanded him to take to Nineveh, for,” said he, “I know that thou art a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness;” and Jonah reproached the Lord that he should have withheld the punishment that he had threatened to the sinful people of Nineveh.

Fearing, perhaps, the anger and contempt of the people, now that his words had proved untrue, Jonah withdrew from the city, and going out on the eastern side, he made himself a booth or tent, and sat under the shadow of it till he might see what would become of the city. And it was here that God had recourse to a means of softening the heart of the prophet, and teaching him, through his own feelings, that mercy which he would have refused to the people of Nineveh.

“The Lord God prepared a gourd, and made it to come up over Jonah, that it might be a shadow over his head to deliver him from his grief. And Jonah was exceedingly glad of the gourd. But God prepared a worm, when the morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd that it withered; and when the sun arose a vehement east wind also sprang up, which, together with the sun, beat upon the head of Jonah, so that he fainted, and wished in himself to die, and said, It is better to die than live.

“And God said to Jonah, Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd? And he said, I do well to be angry even unto death.

“Then said the Lord, Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow ; which came up in a night and perished in a night ; and should I not spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than six-score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left, and also much cattle ?”—The city, which was so full of people, as to contain six-score thousand children, so young as not to know their right hand from their left—should this populous city not be the object of compassion to Him who is ever full of mercy and loving-kindness towards the creatures whom he has made ?

And with this rebuke the history of Jonah ends and nothing more is there recorded of the prophet. By the inhabitants of the east his tomb is to this day shown on the banks of the Tigris ; but as another tomb is also pointed out in the Holy Land, as that of the prophet Jonah, it is uncertain whether he died at Nineveh or returned again to his own country.

Jonah is supposed to have lived about 800 years before the birth of our Saviour, and about eighty years before the time of the prophet Isaiah.

PART II.

THE BURIED CITY.

WE have seen how the destruction of Nineveh, as foretold by Jonah, was for a time withheld ; but it would seem that the repentance of the people was but of short duration, and that they returned again to idolatry and sin. Other prophets rose up among the Hebrews, who spoke of the doom that yet hung over the great city, even at a time when its power was at the greatest, and other kings had succeeded the king of Nineveh, who had turned to God at the preaching of Jonah. Of these, one named Shalmanezar, had invaded the land of Israel, and carried captive, into Assyria, ten of its tribes, leaving in their place numbers of his own idolatrous subjects. There was every thing to lead men to suppose the strength and power of the Assyrians to be without end or limit. But the word of God, as spoken through the mouths of his prophets, still told of its coming downfall and ruin ; and so did it come to pass, for Nineveh was destroyed. Of the time and manner of its destruction little is known to any certainty ; but by one historian the following story is related :— It is said, that a king arose, more remarkable, even than any who had preceded him, for his luxurious living, his pride and power. Far over the east was his name known, for the splendour with which he was surrounded, and for his indulgence in every species of revelry and dissipation. But he was not happy. Even in the recesses of his gorgeous palace, where troops of slaves ministered to his pleasure, and bent the knee before him, where gold and silver, and precious stones, decorated his dress and fur-

niture, and sculptured marble and paintings adorned the walls of his apartments, and where guards stood around to protect him, and a powerful army was ever ready to do his bidding—even there, a secret knowledge of the destruction that awaited him, disturbed the mind of the king. Not merely the predictions of the Jewish prophets may have reached his ear, for to these, perhaps, he would give little heed,—but an old tradition existed, it is said, even in the annals of his own nation, which foretold the overthrow of Nineveh. This ancient prophecy was remembered more especially by the king, when the king of Babylon, assisted by the king of the Medes, brought their mighty hosts against the city, and encamped about its walls to lay siege to it. The tradition said, that the city should not be taken, until the river Tigris “became an enemy to it.” And remembering this, it was not so much the army of his enemies that caused the king to fear, for he knew the strength of his defences, and the power of his warriors:—but it was the dread of some unexpected and unknown evil connected with the great river, which should have been the best protection of the city. Years passed over without his enemies abating in their attempts to take the city; it was, however, in the third year of the siege that the prophecy was fulfilled. The river Tigris, probably at the spring of the year, after the melting of the snow upon the distant mountains where it rises, or in consequence of continual rains, became swollen, and overflowing its banks, broke down part of the city walls for the distance of twenty furlongs. The waters were thus poured into the city, and left an opening by which the army of the enemy could enter it. Great was then the despair of the king! He saw that the ancient prophecy was about to be accomplished, since the waters of the Tigris had indeed become the enemy of Nineveh. Repentance was, however, too late; and, collecting

together his wealth, his stores of gold and silver, his costly robes and precious diadems, and the "pleasant furniture" of his magnificent palace—he caused to be formed an immense funeral pile, upon which he burnt himself, his wives and slaves, and all that he possessed, rather than fall into the hands of his merciless enemies. And thus may it have been, that partly by water, and partly by fire, and partly by the ruthless fury of its enemies—the exceeding great city of Nineveh was destroyed. Such of its inhabitants as escaped destruction, were probably carried away captive into distant lands; and the once great and powerful empire disappeared as it were from off the face of the earth. Years and centuries passed away, and of the great Nineveh little was left but the name; while of the lives and actions of its kings, there remained to be told only half-forgotten and uncertain tales!

But, how remarkably and truly had the words of prophecy, as recorded in the Bible, been fulfilled in these events. As the prophet Nahum had described—"an overrunning flood had made an utter end of the place—the gates had been set open unto its enemies—and fire had devoured its barriers. The horsemen had lifted up the bright sword and glittering spear, and there had been a multitude of slain. It had come to pass, that all who looked upon it had fled from it, and said, Nineveh is waste! Fire and the sword had eaten it up like the canker-worm,—its nobles were in the dust, and its people were scattered upon the mountains—Nineveh was utterly empty, void and waste!"

And not only in its destruction, but in the changes which afterward took place, were the words of the prophets most truly and exactly brought to pass. Nineveh indeed became, as foretold by the prophet Zephaniah,—“A desolation, and dry, like a wilderness.” “Flocks laid down in the midst of her;”

and "wild beasts made it their lair." "The cormorant and the bittern lodged in the upper lintels of her buildings—desolation was in her thresholds, for the cedar-work of her roofs was uncovered." And all this had come to "the rejoicing city, that dwelt carelessly; that said, in her heart, I am, and there is none beside me: how is she become a desolation, and a place for beasts to lie down in."

It is likely, that for a long time, there may have stood remains enough of the ruined palaces and temples of Nineveh, and of its broken-down walls and towers of defence, to shew to the passing traveller where the proud city once stood: and among them, it may be, some unhappy remnant of its inhabitants may have sought to discover the spot where once his dwelling was—but all those traces passed away. With each returning rainy season, the overflowing of the river would help to wash away the raised mounds of earth on which the buildings stood, and deposit thick layers of mud, covering up the crumbling ruins. Then would come the hot and vehement east winds—such as beat upon the head of the prophet Jonah—and these would bring with them clouds of sand from the desert, which accumulating around such of the walls of the palaces and temples as were yet standing, would penetrate into and choke up the apartments. Year after year adding to these accumulations of sand, and earth, and rubbish—the traces of building would gradually vanish—and shapeless mounds would, from time to time, appear in their place. Upon these mounds grass and plants would spring up—flocks would lie down on them—herds would graze on them—and, lastly, the rude villages of a people to whom the name of Nineveh was unknown, would be built upon what may be called its grave.

And so it came to pass, that the nations which rose to power and greatness, long after that of Nineveh had passed away—even those of Greece and Rome, knew not the spot where the great city stood. And we, of the present day, who read in our scriptures of the manner in which the people of Israel were attacked and oppressed by the cruel and powerful Assyrians—who read also of the exceeding great city to which the prophet Jonah was sent—and of whom Christ spoke, when he warned the people of Jerusalem to repent in time—even we, have come to inquire—Where stood the once great and far-famed Nineveh ?

PART III.

THE LOST CITY FOUND.

IT was about twelve years ago that an Englishman of the name of Layard was travelling in Asia Minor and Syria, in order to see the many curious remains which are to be found there of the cities of ancient times. After seeing most of the places which he had read of as a boy in the histories of Greece and Rome, those which had been visited by the apostle Paul in his travels, and above all, the scenes among which our Saviour dwelt while here on earth ;—after seeing all these interesting spots, there came into the mind of the traveller a strong desire to go farther into Asia, and to cross the great desert which lies to the east of Palestine. He longed to find some traces of the great kingdoms of Assyria, Babylonia and Chaldea, of which he had read in the Old Testament—the countries where dwelt the first races of mankind, and by the passing away of whose power and greatness the word of God had been so strikingly fulfilled. He therefore journeyed on. The countries of this part of Asia were at that time in a disturbed state, owing to the Sultan of Turkey and the Pasha of Egypt being at war with one another, and the wild Arabs were taking advantage of the state of confusion to roam about for pillage and plunder. Mr. Layard succeeded, however, in crossing the desert without accident, and arrived safely at Mosul, a town seated on the banks of the Tigris, in the country now called Mesopotamia, but which was formerly part of the kingdom of Assyria. He rested at Mosul, and then journeyed some miles still further south, to a little Arab village on the

western bank of the river. After spending a night at this place, he ascended the next morning a little hillock near the village, and looking across the river, and beyond a low plain which extended from its opposite bank, he saw stretching to a considerable distance a line of lofty but shapeless mounds, among which he was told the remains of a great city would be found. These mounds were called by the inhabitants of the country Nimroud, and in the traditions of the Arabs, it was told that Nimrod was the founder of the city, which was called after his name, and that he had been buried there. Now, Mr. Layard knew that in the book of Genesis it is told how Nimrod, the "mighty hunter," had been the founder of Babylon and Nineveh, and other cities of the east. How likely then that the name of its founder should have thus been preserved to the spot on which the great capital of Assyria had stood, even after its other name had been lost; and when Mr. Layard heard from the Arabs who were his guides, that among these great mounds fragments of bricks, and pottery, and sculptured stone were often found, he was only the more determined to ascertain whether his suppositions were not correct. Floating down the river Tigris on a raft, some time after this, he passed still nearer to the great mounds of Nimroud, and examining them still more closely, he saw much to confirm his belief that he had at length found traces of the long lost-city of Nineveh. The river, swollen by rain, had at one part washed away the soil from its banks, and a solid mass of masonry was exposed to view; and at another part he found the remains of a vast dam, which passing across the stream, formed a considerable cataract. Huge stones, fastened together by clamps of iron, were to be seen projecting above the water, and showed it to be the work of a powerful and ingenious people; for by means of this dam a supply of water had been

secured to fill the numerous canals which branched off from the river and intersected the country. Leaving his raft, Mr. Layard landed and walked to the mounds of earth which had at first attracted his notice. It was then spring, and the early rains had clothed the mounds with the richest verdure, and covered the meadows around with flowers of every hue, while at every step was to be found among the grass and flowers small fragments of pottery and sun-burnt bricks, upon which could be traced the deeply-cut characters or letters of a strange and long-forgotten language. All these circumstances helped greatly to excite the interest of the enterprising and persevering traveller, and to determine him to make still further researches among these mounds ; but he had many difficulties to overcome before he could carry out his plans. Not only had he to journey back to Constantinople to furnish himself with money, but it was necessary also to obtain permission from the Turkish government before he could venture to make excavations in search of the remains he expected to find beneath the surface of these mounds of earth. On returning to Mosul, too, at the end of the following autumn, he had to elude the suspicions of the pasha, or governor of the province, who was both tyrannical and suspicious, and would have opposed his scheme had he confided it to him. He was therefore obliged to procure secretly a few tools for digging, and provide himself with guns, and spears, and weapons of defence, and then, under pretence that he was going to hunt wild boars in a neighbouring village, he started from Mosul with a friend and servant, and a hired mason, and floated down the Tigris on a raft to the mound of Nimroud. It was sunset when they reached the great dam which crossed the river, and they landed and walked to an Arab village which lay near the mound. As they approached, no lights were

to be seen, and no dogs came out to salute them by barking. The village proved to be but a heap of ruined huts, and they were returning disappointed to their raft, when the glare of a fire was perceived through the entrance of a miserable hovel. Through a crevice in the wall they saw an Arab family crouching round a heap of half-extinguished embers. The dress of the man—his wide cloak and white turban—showed him to belong to one of the Arab tribes which cultivate a little land on the border of the desert, and are more settled than the wild Bedouin Arabs. On the entrance of the strangers, the poor Arab arose, and bade them welcome, promising them not only shelter for the night, but assistance on the morrow in digging among the neighbouring mounds. Seated upon empty corn sacks, which their host spread for them on the ground, Mr. Layard and his companions spent the night in this miserable dwelling, listening to the strange legends and stories told by their host about the founding of the great city by Nimrod, which had once stood there, and of the holy Abraham, who had broken the idols of their heathen worshippers. After listening to these tales, Mr. Layard slept only to dream of the buried city he hoped to bring to light, and visions of underground palaces and gigantic idols seemed to float through his brain, and he fancied himself wandering through mazes of apartments from which he could find no outlet, and of which there was no end. He woke to find that the sun had arisen, and through the door of the hut the first object that he saw was the great mound of Nimroud standing like a mountain against the morning sky, still a vast shapeless mass of earth, untrodden and untouched.

With the assistance of the Arab who had given him shelter, and who was called Awad, Mr. Layard collected together a party of workmen, and proceeded without loss of time to the mounds. He found them

much changed in aspect since he had last visited them. The verdure and flowers had disappeared, and all around was nothing but a parched and barren waste, over which every now and then the whirlwind swept, bringing with it clouds of sand and dust. The scene around was cheerless and desolate, but more anxiously than the miner, who hopes to find a fresh vein of gold, did Mr. Layard commence his search for his hidden treasure. Pacing to and fro upon the principal mound, he found, as before, numerous fragments of broken pottery and bricks covered with inscriptions. Eagerly watching his motions, the Arabs who accompanied him joined soon in the search, and, on bringing him handfuls of rubbish, he found among them, to his delight, a piece of sculptured alabaster, and on beholding the joy which this discovery occasioned, they led him to a part of the mound where a similar piece of alabaster projected from beneath the soil. Here it was that Mr. Layard commenced his diggings in search of the buried city!

The party of Arabs were directed to set to work, and in the course of the morning two large slabs of alabaster, covered with carved characters or letters, were dug out of the crumbling earth. It was evident that they formed part of the walls of an apartment which had been destroyed by fire, for the alabaster was in many places *calcined*, or burnt to lime, so that it fell to powder on being exposed to the air. Could this indeed be a part of one of the palaces of Nineveh, in which the great king had destroyed himself by fire, when besieged and subdued by his enemies?

Filled with joy and satisfaction at this result of his first day's labour, Mr. Layard now made preparations for establishing himself in some sort of a dwelling near the interesting mounds in which he hoped to make still further discoveries. One of the least ruined houses of the neighbouring village, was patched up with mud, and its falling roof restored

so as to afford him and his party a nightly shelter from the cold winds, and the next day new excavations were made in the grounds. Slabs of alabaster forming the walls of other apartments were found among the rubbish, at the bottom of these were picked out fragments of ivory, carved and gilded with taste and elegance. The mere sight of gold was enough to awaken the suspicions of the ignorant Arabs, and lead them to think that this was, after all, the real object of Mr. Layard's researches. Calling him aside in a mysterious and confidential fashion, his Arab friend, Awad, produced, wrapped up in a piece of dirty paper, some tiny fragments of gold leaf which he had found in the rubbish. 'O Bey,' said he, 'Wallah! your books are right, and the Franks know what is hidden from the true believers. Here is the gold sure enough, and, please God, we shall find it all in a few days. Only don't say any thing about it to those Arabs, for they are asses, and cannot hold their tongues, and the matter will come to the ears of the pasha.' The finder of the gold was indeed surprised when Mr. Layard presented him with the treasure he had collected, and promised him all that he might hereafter find of it for himself. He was at a loss to imagine how carved and sculptured stones should possess more value in his eyes than scraps of gilding.

The discovery of this gold, however, was very near becoming of only too much importance to Mr. Layard, and might have caused his operations at the great mound to be interfered with by the Cadi or magistrate of Mosul. Reports of the discovery of gold soon reached his ears, and Mr. Layard was summoned to appear before him. From the Cadi, he was sent to the Pasha, or chief governor, and when in his presence, he was not a little amused at being shown the very same scraps of gold in the dirty paper which Awad had found, and which were

shown to him to prove that his secret intentions were discovered. It was only after requesting the governor to appoint an officer to receive all the gold that might be found at the mounds, that Mr. Layard was allowed to return and proceed with his excavations.

We have seen what was the result of the first day's work upon the mound, but as the work proceeded, more and more traces of walls and apartments were found, so as to leave no doubt in the mind of Mr. Layard, that he had come upon part of some ancient city which had been for many centuries buried from view. He resolved to establish himself for the winter in a still larger village which lay near the mounds, where he would be better protected from the wandering Arabs, and where he would be able to secure the assistance of a greater number of workmen. Even here, however, he had for the shelter of himself and party, only a collection of mud-huts, covered in with reeds and boughs of trees, and then plastered over. The winter rains penetrated this imperfect roof so as to render it often necessary to sleep at night crouched down in a corner, or under the table which stood in the middle. A thousand privations and hardships lay before this enterprising traveller in thus entering upon his labours, and the difficulties he had to encounter with the Arab workmen, who were to assist him; were enough to have frightened and discouraged any one less bold and persevering, but the interest he felt in the discovery he had already made, was sufficient to give him courage for all that he had to endure.

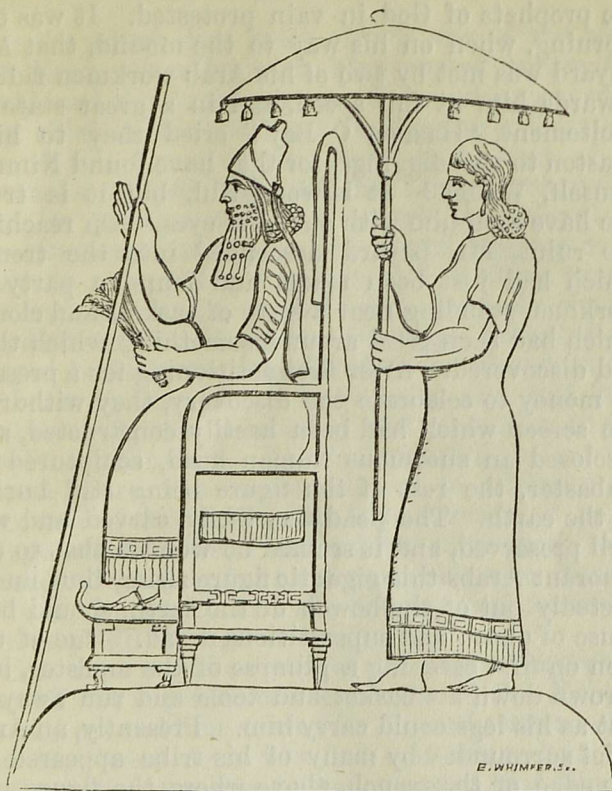
Having thus made his arrangements for staying at Nimroud all through the winter months, the diggings at the mound were continued without further interruption, and the labour of each day brought something curious and wonderful to light. Finding

that the remains of buildings were some distance beneath the surface of the earth, Mr. Layard resolved to make cuttings or trenches into the mound from its sloping sides, so as to get by this means quicker to the level on which they had stood, and after removing a mass of earth mixed with charcoal, charred wood, and broken bricks, they came to slabs of stone upon which were carved most curious figures, in what is called *bas-relief*—by which is meant, that the sculpture projects from the surface of the stone like the impression of a seal. On the first of these slabs that they brought to light, was the representation of a battle scene. Horses richly caparisoned, drew two chariots, in which stood warriors clothed in suits of mail, and with helmets on their heads. One of the warriors held in his hand a bow at full stretch, ready to discharge an arrow; another, with reins and whip drove the horses galloping at full speed, and the third figure held before the principal one a shield to protect him. Beneath the feet of the horses and scattered about were the prostrate enemies wounded by the arrows of the conquering warriors. Here, then, was the representation, perhaps, of one of the kings of Nineveh, at the moment of gaining a victory over his enemies, which, to commemorate the exploit, had been sculptured upon the walls of an apartment in his palace! We can well imagine the delight of Mr. Layard at this discovery. He relates that even the Arabs were so excited and pleased, that they worked till dark in the pouring rain until they had completely exposed to view two such slabs. Each day and hour some strange and interesting discovery was made, as the band of workmen, under Mr. Layard's directions, proceeded with their diggings, and laid bare one after another the walls of different apartments, which were thus brought to the light of day for the first time since the terrible overthrow of the great city. The walls

had themselves been first formed of bricks, and against them had been placed slabs of sculptured stone and alabaster, on which it would seem that all the great actions and exploits of the different owners of the palace had been portrayed. On some were scenes in which warriors were in the act of besieging fortresses, while from the battlements the besieged people shot arrows and threw down stones from slings. On others were represented the king followed by attendants chasing lions and wild boars, the king being distinguished from the rest of the figures by a particular sort of high-crowned cap or helmet, and by having an umbrella or parasol held over his head by an attendant to protect him from the sun. In others he was to be seen seated on a chair of state, receiving his principal officers, or having brought before him prisoners taken in battle, with their arms tied behind them; or the people of a different nation were to be seen, bringing presents or tribute to him.

On all the slabs were inscriptions, as if to recount the names and titles of the kings, whose deeds were thus recorded upon the walls of their palaces. Even the floors of these apartments were covered over with closely-written characters, and each fragment of tile or brick was stamped with what seemed to be the names or title of a king. Most of these bricks we may observe had been formed of the mud which was deposited by the river, and had been baked only in the sun, instead of being burnt in kilns after the manner of ours.

By the orders of Mr. Layard, the workmen now made trenches or cuttings in several other parts of the mound, and traces were found in every direction of apartments similar to those at first found, which opened one into the other, evidently belonging to one large and magnificent palace. Among these were long and lofty rooms and halls, which



seemed as if they had been used for purposes connected with the religion of the Assyrians; and on the walls of these were representations of priests in the act of performing religious ceremonies, and strange figures with the faces of eagles and with large wings hanging down the sides of their bodies, which in other respects were like those of human beings. Other traces however, were to be found of the idolatry of the ancient people of Nineveh, and of the very idols against the worship of which

the prophets of God in vain protested. It was one morning, when on his way to the mound, that Mr. Layard was met by two of his Arab workmen riding towards him at full speed, and in a great state of excitement, 'Hasten, O Bey!' cried they to him, 'hasten to the diggings, for they have found Nimrod himself, Wallah! It is wonderful, but it is true. We have seen him with our own eyes.' On reaching the ruins, Mr. Layard descended into the trench which had just been made, and found a party of workmen standing near a heap of baskets and cloaks which had been piled around something which they had discovered. After first petitioning for a present of money to celebrate the discovery, they withdrew the screen which had been hastily constructed, and disclosed an enormous human head, sculptured in alabaster, the rest of the figure being still buried in the earth. The head was finely carved and was well preserved, and it seemed no wonder that to the ignorant Arabs this gigantic figure rising thus unexpectedly out of the bowels of the earth, should be a cause of alarm and superstitious dread. One of the men on first catching a glimpse of the monster, had thrown down his basket and tools and run away as fast as his legs could carry him. Presently, an Arab chief surrounded by many of his tribe appeared on the edge of the trench, above where the figure had been found. They had been summoned by the two Arab horsemen whom Mr. Layard had met. These men who were Mahomedans, no sooner saw the great head than they exclaimed, 'There is no God but God, and Mahomet is his prophet.' And struck with awe, it was some time before the chief or sheik could be prevailed upon to descend into the trench and convince himself that the image he saw was of stone. 'This is not the work of men's hands,' exclaimed he, 'but of those infidel giants, of whom the prophet has said, that they were taller

than the tallest date tree ; this is one of the idols that Noah, peace be with him, cursed before the flood,' and the Arabs who stood around agreed with their chief in this opinion. On digging still farther around this figure, it was found to be that of an enormous winged bull, and Mr. Layard perceiving from its position that it was probably placed at the entrance of an apartment, caused diggings to be made in an opposite direction, and at about twelve feet from the first, a second figure precisely similar was discovered. These two immense human-faced winged bulls, were thus found to be placed at the entrance to one of the large halls, and had been doubtless, objects of worship and veneration to the people of Nineveh. It was nightfall before the second figure was uncovered, and to celebrate the discovery of these idols, Mr. Layard returned to the village where he slept, and ordered some sheep to be killed, and sending for some musicians who chanced to be in the neighbourhood, dancing and festivities were kept up through the night.

This discovery, however, as did everything which startled the superstitious ignorance of the Mahomedans around him, caused Mr. Layard some trouble. The frightened Arab who had run away, hastened to the *cadi* or magistrate, and reported that Nimrod had been discovered among the ruins, and a procession was formed to announce it to the Pasha at Mosul. Whether the bones of Nimrod had been found, or only his image, and who Nimrod had really been, they did not know ; but a message was sent from the Pasha to the effect, that his remains should be treated with all possible respect, and be by no means further disturbed, so that the excavations were to be stopped. To allay the fears of the people, Mr. Layard was obliged partly to obey this command, and dismissing his party of workmen all but

two, he continued with these to work leisurely for some months at exposing the wonderful remains.

Before proceeding with our account of Mr. Layard's researches, we will relate some particulars of the Arab people with whom he was obliged to live on such intimate terms for many months, and with whose habits and manners he had so many opportunities of becoming acquainted. These people, who are to be found scattered over all the west of Asia, are supposed to be descendants of Ishmael the son of Abraham and Hagar, of whom it was predicted that they should be for ever a wild and wandering race, "Their hand against every man, and every man's hand against them." This prophecy has been most singularly fulfilled, since the greater number of the tribes into which they are divided live principally by plunder and pillage, and are never known to settle in towns or build themselves permanent habitations. Over each of the tribes rules a sheik, or sort of chief, whom the rest obey. Although robbers by profession, these men have among them a rude sort of morality which is founded on the laws of hospitality. Should by any chance a traveller take refuge in the tent or hut of an Arab, and partake of food with him, or should he himself have entered the stranger's dwelling, from that moment he is looked upon as a friend, and would be left unmolested and even defended from the attacks of others. It was on this account that Mr. Layard was anxious on all occasions to make friends with these people, and though the acquaintanceship was at times troublesome, it was the only way in which he could remain among them with safety, or secure their services. We have seen

how the Arab Awad who at first gave him a shelter in his hut was afterwards of great assistance to him, in engaging others of his tribe to work at the excavations in the mound, and he continued faithful all through. Other tribes, however, heard of Mr. Layard's doings, and from curiosity or the hope of gain came to visit him from afar. To conciliate these men it was necessary for him to make them presents; but their friendliness soon became troublesome and annoying. A report being spread that one of these sheiks had received from him a present of a silk dress, an embroidered cloak or a pair of boots, another sheik would presently come with a large party of attendants, and tying their horses at the door, would enter his abode to hint or ask openly for presents of the same kind also. Others brought offerings of dates and honey, and cheese made of goats' milk, and seating themselves in his hut would talk with him and receive his presents in return; but would only eat out of their own vessels, and when the time for prayer arrived would remove to the hut of some Mahommedan near, and there spread the carpet on which to kneel in prayer. One of these, the chief of a large tribe of wandering Arabs, was considered a person of great sanctity, and Mr. Layard did not think it necessary to take any notice of his hints for some presents, during his visit. To prevent any misunderstanding however, the sheik sent his secretary the next day to give still plainer hints for a few gifts. 'Not that his reverence,' said he to Mr. Layard, 'desires to accept anything from you, but it would be highly gratifying to him to prove to his tribe that he has met with a friendly reception from so distinguished a person as yourself, and to spread through the mountains reports of your generosity.'

Mr. Layard said, in answer, 'that the difference between his religion and that of the sheik would,

of course, prevent his accepting any thing from him, and that therefore he was at a loss to know how he could meet his wishes.' But the cunning secretary was not to be so silenced. He suggested, that the attendants of the sheik were not so particular on that score as himself, and that to each of them Mr. Layard might give a pair of yellow boots, and a silk dress; or, if he had any pistols or daggers they would be glad of them. 'As for me,' said the secretary, 'I am a man of letters, and have no need of arms or boots. You might, therefore, shew your approbation of my devotedness to your service, by giving me white linen for a turban, and a pair of breeches. The Effendi, my master, however, would not object to a set of razors; besides, he would feel obliged if you could lend him a small sum—five purses for instance. (Wallah Billah Zillah! he would do the same for you at any time) for which he would give you a note of hand.' The only way in which Mr. Layard could rid himself of this troublesome visitor, was by making a list of all the things that would be acceptable to his master, which he said he might be able to procure at Mosul—the little village in which he lived having no shops or bazaars. And he suggested, also, that considering the dignity of his master, it would be most proper that he should go himself, to return his visit in person, and offer his presents. In this manner, Mr. Layard at last contrived to get rid of his troublesome guests; and, after a stay of four days, the Mollah Effendi Bey, which was the title of this sheik, mounted his horse, and, followed by his attendants, rode off into the desert.

When winter was over, the Arabs, who had passed this season in huts of mud, now pitched their tents upon the plain; and such as could not afford the black goats' hair-cloth of which they were made, constructed themselves huts of reeds, and dry grass.

The spring, which in Mesopotamia corresponds very nearly to ours, clothed the country all around with brilliant verdure. The pasture-lands were covered with a rich and luxuriant herbage, and corn sprang up quickly wherever it was sown. Flowers again enamelled the meadows in thick patches, not thinly scattered, as in more northern countries; and the sweetest perfumes were wafted with each passing gale. The very dogs, as they came from the chace, issued from the long grass dyed red, blue or yellow, according to the flowers they had forced themselves through. Seated at the door of his tent, after the labours of the day were over, Mr. Layard took pleasure in watching the simple habits of the people around him. As the sun sank behind the distant snow-capped mountains, the bleating of the sheep, and lowing of the cattle, announced their return from the pastures, to wander among the tents. Arab girls hurried over the green sward to seek out their father's cattle, or crouched down to milk those which had returned of their own accord to the fold. Some were seen coming from the river, bearing pitchers of water on their shoulders, or carried heavy loads of grass, which they had cut in the meadows. Sometimes parties of horsemen might be seen in the distance, slowly crossing the plain; the tufts of ostrich feathers which topped their long spears, showing darkly against the evening sky. They would ride up to Mr. Layard's tent, and give him the usual salutation, of 'Peace be with you, O Bey'—or, 'God help you.' Then, driving their lances into the ground, they would spring from their horses, and fastening their halters to the stakes, would sit down on the grass, and relate the tales of their wars and plunderings, until the moon rising, they sprang again into their saddles, and rode away into the desert. On occasions, when Mr. Layard partook of the hospitality of these people, sheep would be

slaughtered and boiled ; while large wooden bowls of sour milk, and platters of fresh butter, were placed before him. When the meat was cooked, the Arabs would put their fingers into the cauldron, and pulling out pieces of meat, lay them on wooden platters, the guest being also expected to eat in his fingers. The Arabs are naturally hospitable and generous. If one of the workmen was wealthy enough to buy a handful of raisins, or a piece of camel's or sheep's flesh, or, if he had a cow which occasionally yielded him butter, or sour milk, he would immediately call together his friends to partake of his feast. Mr. Layard would be frequently invited to such entertainments, the whole repast consisting of half-a-dozen dates, or raisins, spread out wide, to make the best show, upon a corn-sack, with a pat of butter upon the corner of a flat loaf, or a few cakes of dough baked in the ashes ; and yet the meal was ushered in with the greatest solemnity ; the host turning his dirty head-kerchief and his cloak to look smart and clean, and appearing proud of the honour done him by the visit.

The Arab women are accustomed to perform almost all the labour required for the wants of their families. They make the bread, and fetch the water, and cut the wood, which they have to bring home from afar on their heads. They have to strike and raise the tents, when they move from one place to another, and to unload the beasts of burden. If their husbands possess sheep or cows, they have to drive the animals to the pastures, and milk them at night ; and, in travelling, they carry the children on their backs, and even when going about their household business, if too young to be left alone ; the men all the while sitting indolently by, smoking their pipes, and listening to trifling stories and gossip. Mr. Layard did much to improve the condition of these poor women while living amongst them. He punished

such of the husbands as beat their wives, and released them from the labour of fetching water from the river, by employing for that purpose horses and donkeys. Otherwise, the women would bring it in large goat or sheep-skins, strapped to their backs, on the top of which was seated the child too young to follow its mother on foot. The women worked cheerfully; and it was seldom the husbands had to complain of their idleness. In time, however, they acquired such confidence in Mr. Layard, as to appeal to his protection, when their husbands behaved cruelly or unjustly to them: and they were not without fears as to how they would be treated after he had left. 'O Bey,' said they, on one occasion, to him, 'we are your sacrifice. May God reward you! Have we not eaten wheaten bread, and even butter, since we have lived under your shadow? Is there one of us that has not now a coloured kerchief for her head, bracelets and ankle-rings, and a striped cloak? But what shall we do when you leave us, which God forbid you ever should do? Our husbands will then have their turn, and there will be no one to help us.'

The daily meal of the Arab workmen at the mound, which was breakfast and dinner in one, was generally brought to them at eleven o'clock, by the younger children. To satisfy their hunger, few had more than a loaf of millet bread, or millet made into a kind of paste; for wheaten bread was a kind of luxury. Sometimes their wives had found time to gather a few herbs, which were boiled in water with a little salt, and sent in wooden bowls; and, in spring, some milk and curds usually accompanied the bread. The little children, who carried their father's or brother's portion, came merrily along, and sat smiling on the edge of the trenches, or stood gazing in wonder at the sculptures, until they were sent back with the empty platters and bowls. The

workmen sat together, as they ate, in the trenches where they had been digging; a little water, drunk out of a large jar, being their only beverage. Yet they were happy and joyous. The joke went round: or, during the short time they had to rest, one told a story, which they continued the next day, if they had not time to finish it. Sometimes a pedlar from Mosul, driving before him his donkey, laden with raisins, or dried dates, would appear on the mound, and buying up his store, and distributing it among the Arabs, Mr. Layard would cause great delight and satisfaction. At other times he gave feasts to the workmen and their families; inviting the wives and daughters to separate entertainments, as they were not permitted to eat with the men in public. Wandering musicians were engaged to play to them, and the night would be spent in dancing, of which the Arabs are immoderately fond. In every way in his power Mr. Layard seems to have endeavoured to encourage good feeling among his workmen; and the habits of industry and regular employment which they acquired with him, may have produced a lasting good effect on their characters. At times, however, their old fondness for pillage and robbery would show itself, and break through their newly-adopted habits. Mr. Layard was riding home one evening from the ruins, accompanied by an English friend, who was paying him a visit, when they came up with his party of Arab workmen returning from their day's labour. Following a flock of sheep belonging to the people of the village, these men were shouting and hallooing, brandishing their swords, and indulging in all kinds of strange gestures. Amazed at these violent proceedings, Mr. Layard inquired the cause, when the most active of the party exclaimed, 'O Bey, God be praised, we have eaten butter and wheaten bread under your shadow, and are content.'

But an Arab is an Arab. It is not for him to carry dirt about in a basket, and to use a spade all his life ; he should be with his sword and his mare in the desert. We are sad when we think of the days when we plundered our enemy's tribe, and we must have excitement or our hearts will break. Let us then believe, that we have taken these sheep from our enemy, and that we are driving them home to our tents'—and off they ran, raising their wild war-cry, and flourishing their swords in the air, to the no small alarm of the shepherd, who saw his sheep scampering about in all directions, and did not seem to enter into the joke.

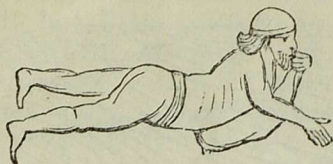
Among the Arabs employed at different times by Mr. Layard, for his works at the mound of Nimroud, were some who were particularly interesting to him, as being Christians. They belonged to a people called Nestorians, who have been long known in the east as followers of Christ, and the remnant of whom still inhabit the mountains of Kurdistan, and continue to practise their pure and simple religion. They profess to have received their faith from the apostles themselves, and to have kept it unchanged and uncorrupted ever since. They have among them some of the books of the New Testament, which are written in the Chaldean language ; and they preserve many of the observances of other Christians, such as baptism and the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Especially are they remarkable for their observance of the sabbath, and the Arab Christians employed by Mr. Layard were strict in abstaining from work or from journeying on that day. Two of the men would occasionally walk to a distant village on the Saturday evening, to fetch a supply of flour for the coming week, and would return early on the Monday morning in order to avoid travelling on the sabbath. On these days they would assemble on the mound or in the trenches,

while one of their priests or deacons would repeat prayers, or lead a hymn or chant, the hearers kneeling reverently with uncovered heads.

How striking and impressive must have been the sight of these poor Christians, worshipping thus the great and invisible Father of mankind, in the very presence of those idols, and amid the remains of those temples, which, by his will and power, had been overthrown! Never, as Mr. Layard observes, was the triumph of truth more plainly shown than in the worship of these followers of Him, whose doctrines are now so widely spread over the face of the globe, while of the religion of the ancient heathens, who once worshipped on that spot, we have nothing left but the crumbling remains, which these poor Christians were helping to bring to light, after being for thousands of years buried beneath the earth.

With the return of spring, Mr. Layard was enabled to continue his diggings at the mound of Nimroud on a larger scale than he had before attempted, and in the course of a few months, the remains of a very extensive building was laid completely open to the view, while in another part of the mound another very considerable palace was also brought to light. He was now able to wander through a long and intricate series of apartments, opening one into the other, around which were sculptured slabs, which by their representations, told him many a tale, not only of the lives and actions of the kings, who had inhabited the palaces, but of the manner of life of their subjects. It is not to be wondered at that very many of them portrayed scenes of battle and warfare, of sieges and the taking of prisoners, reminding us of the cruel wars undertaken so often by the kings of Assyria against the people of Israel. In some were seen scribes taking down the number of the slain

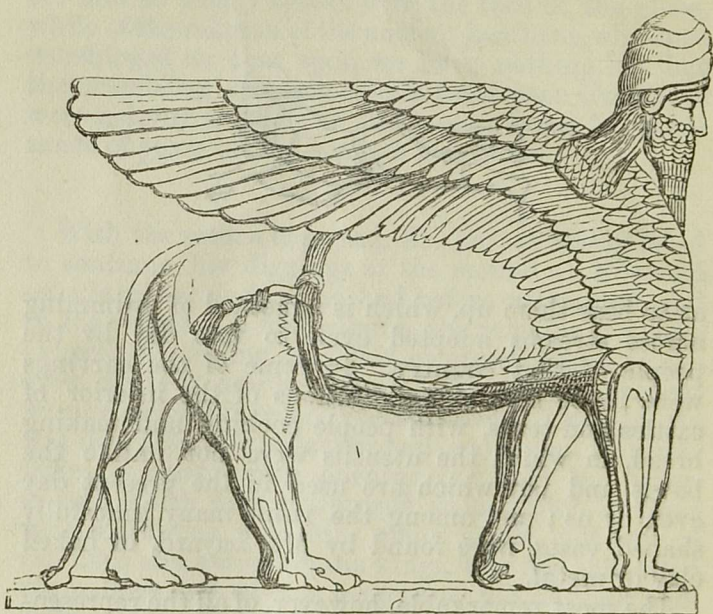
the heads of the slaughtered enemies being brought as trophies of conquest. In others were pinioned captives, men and women standing before their conquerors, while the elephants, baboons, and apes, and other strange animals of a foreign country, were led as it were in procession, to give evidence of victory. On some of the slabs were carved rude pictures of rivers, with trees on their banks, boats rowed with oars, and men catching fish with rods and lines. Others, in which men were crossing streams on goat skins blown out like bladders, so



as to bear them up, which is a method of swimming across streams adopted even to this day by the people of that country. In some of the carvings were to be seen representations of the interior of castles and tents, with people cooking and making bread, in which the utensils were not unlike the bowls and jars which are used in the present day even by us ; and among the ruins many gracefully shaped vases were found by Mr. Layard, of baked clay or metal.

The most remarkable, however, of all the representations found on the walls of the different apartments, were those which related to the idolatrous ceremonies of the Ninevites. It almost seemed as if the royal owners of these palaces had themselves been held sacred, and worshipped by their ignorant subjects, so that their palaces were as much the temples of

their religion as the dwelling-places of their kings. Around many of the apartments were strange emblems and mysterious symbols, mixed up with figures of priests and winged monsters, half birds and half men, while kings in gorgeous apparel, and covered with richly embroidered robes, and decorated with fringes and tassels, and jewelled breast-plates, received the homage of strangely-clothed priests. At the entrances of all the larger apartments were pairs of gigantic human-faced and winged bulls or lions,



similar to the one whose discovery had occasioned so much alarm among the Arabs, and these enormous and imposing-looking figures, if not actually objects of worship, were well calculated to inspire a super-

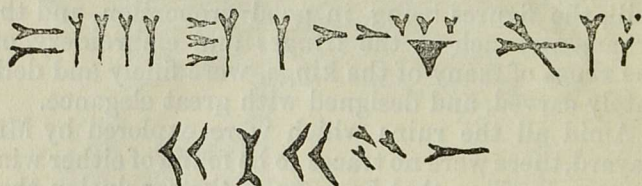
stitious sort of reverence in the ignorant people, who were admitted into these halls and temples.

What must have greatly added to the effect of all the sculptures, was the brilliant colouring with which they were covered, and of which Mr. Layard found many traces. Beautiful borders and patterns, too, painted on plaster, in deep and brilliant colours—red, blue, and yellow—had passed around the rooms, above and below the sculptured slabs, and every figure had its appropriate colouring ; so that nothing could have been more gorgeous than these highly decorated apartments at the time when they were inhabited by the kings of Nineveh. Many of the sculptures were but rudely executed, as if by a people who had made but little progress in art, and not unlike the drawings attempted by very young children ; but others were done with considerable skill, the figures being in good proportion, and the ornaments, such as the fringes and embroidery, on the robes of many of the kings, were finely and delicately carved, and designed with great elegance.

Amid all the ruins which were explored by Mr. Layard, there were no traces to be found of either windows or roofs, so that he came to the conclusion that the apartments had been covered over with a framework constructed entirely of wood, having an opening in the centre to admit the light. In the book of the prophet Zephaniah, it speaks of the *cedar-work* of the palaces of Nineveh being uncovered at the time of its destruction, and it is likely that the roofs were formed of this wood, and afterwards destroyed by fire, since many of the apartments were found choked up with charcoal and charred wood. It would seem also that no sort of decorations were placed on the outsides of the palace walls, all the sculptures being within ; and from the absence of any trace of doors, it may be concluded that these were also of wood. It did not surprise Mr. Layard that he should nowhere come upon the remains of

what would have been the habitations of the people of Nineveh, since he believes it to be most probable that the inhabitants, all but the kings and the nobles, dwelt in tents, or houses of sun-burnt brick, similar to those inhabited by the present dwellers of Mesopotamia. The ancient city of Nineveh, in fact, must have been like a walled province, rather than a town, the greater part of its population living only in tents or temporary habitations, whose destruction, at the time of its overthrow, was so complete, as to leave no trace whatever of their existence.

Interesting above all in the remains of Nineveh, were the carved inscriptions found everywhere upon the walls and floors of the apartments. In all these inscriptions the character was the same, which from the wedge-shaped strokes that form the letter has



been sometimes called *cuneiform*, and at others, *arrow-headed*, from their resemblance to the end of an arrow. Nothing could exceed the extreme regularity and neatness with which this writing is carved on the stones at Nineveh, and great indeed will be the interest, if the day should come when it can all be read and translated. Already Mr. Layard and others who have studied this writing, have been able to make out which words in these inscriptions represent the names of some of the kings of Nineveh, followed or preceded by their titles and the same names and titles have been found repeated again and again on bricks and stones, in the same manner as in England, the royal

arms are often printed or stamped upon articles of manufacture. It would seem too, as if the very walls and floors of the apartments of the palaces at Nineveh, had been the *books* in which the history of the kingdom had been written, or rather, in which the exploits of their kings had been recorded, and many of these inscriptions are so sharply cut, and apparently had been so unworn by the tread of footsteps or the hand of time before the moment of their being closed up from the light of day by the destruction of the city, that it would seem as if the chronicles of the kingdom may have been kept in this way until near the time of its overthrow. The day may come, when learned and persevering men shall have contrived to make out the meaning of all this curious *arrow-headed* writing of the ancient Ninevites. They may be able to read from it the record of the coming of the Hebrew prophet, who told that the great city would be destroyed, and it may be that the chronicler will have added, that this prophecy proved *untrue* ! In this way too may be recorded the name and doings of the great Assyrian king, Shalmanesar, who went up against Samaria, the capital of the ten tribes of Israel, and carried away its inhabitants into captivity ; and it is possible, that from these stories may one day be read, the same account which we find in the Bible, of the fatal punishment that fell upon the Assyrian king Sennacherib, who went in the time of king Hezekiah, with a large army of horsemen and warriors in chariots to besiege Jerusalem, and who after impiously taunting the pious king for his trust in the God who alone was able to save him out of the hand of his enemy, was rebuked in so awful a manner for his pride and wickedness—for “it came to pass that night that the angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred, four-score and five thousand ;

and when they arose early in the morning, behold they were all dead corpses. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned and dwelt at Nineveh."

And of this same Sennacherib, it is recorded in the Bible, that he was murdered by his own sons when worshipping in the temple of his god Nisroch ; while by many it is supposed that his son Esarhaddon, who succeeded him, was the last of the powerful and cruel kings of Nineveh.

A large portion of the mound of Nimroud having been thus explored by Mr. Layard, and having convinced himself that the remains he had found, were a part of the 'exceeding great city' of Nineveh, his next endeavours were to remove such portions of the sculptured stones and alabaster, as when transported to our country, should enable us to form a good idea of this ancient city. It was easy enough to manage the removal of many of the sculptured slabs which had adorned the walls of the palaces ; but it was with great difficulty and only after much preparation, that he succeeded in getting two of the gigantic winged bulls removed from the mound and carried down to the river. To effect this, he was first obliged to have a rough sort of wagon or cart constructed at Mosul, to which a number of oxen were yoked, and besides these, a large troop of Arabs was required to drag it over the plain which lay between the mound and the river. A great raft then had to be made, on which the huge idols were to be floated down to where the Tigris falls into the Persian Gulf, and afterwards they had to be conveyed in a ship to England. The rafts on the Tigris are floated by means of sheep or goat-skins sewn up and inflated, and by this means the heavy cargo of sculptured stones was kept above the surface of the water. The removal and embarkation of these remains was a cause of great excitement

among the Arabs, who assisted Mr. Layard, and sheiks with their tribes came from afar to witness the ceremony. One of these could not refrain from expressing his surprise, that Mr. Layard should take so much trouble to carry these stones away to his own country. 'Wonderful! Wonderful!' said he, 'In the name of the Most High, tell me, O Bey, what you are going to do with these stones? So many thousands of purses spent upon these things! Can it be as you say, that your people learn wisdom from them; or is it that they are to go to the palace of your queen who worships these idols? As for wisdom, these figures will not teach you to make better knives and scissors, or chintzes; and it is in the making of these things that the English show their wisdom. But God is great! Here are stones which have been buried ever since the time of the holy Noah—peace be with him! Perhaps, they were underground before the deluge. I have lived on these lands for years. My father, and the father of my father, pitched their tents here before me; but they never heard of these figures. For twelve hundred years have the true believers (the Mahommedans) been settled in this country, and none of them ever heard of a palace underground, neither did they who went before them. But lo! here comes a Frank from many days' journey off, and he walks up to the very place, and he takes a stick and makes a line here, and a line there,' and as he spoke the Arab with the point of his spear suited his action to his words,—'Here says he, is the palace; there says he is the gate; and he shows us what has been all our lives beneath our feet, without our having known anything about it. Wonderful! Wonderful! Is it by books, is it by magic, or is it by your prophets, that you have learnt such things? Speak, O Bey and tell me the secret of wisdom.'

And the wonder of the Arab chief did not surprise

even Mr. Layard, when he reflected on the curious changes that had taken place in the history of these sculptures; the strange scenes they had been witness to at the time of the greatness of Nineveh, and at her downfall; and when especially he thought of the long eventful ages during which they had lain buried in the earth: while nothing could be more strange or wonderful than their now being transported thousands of miles across the sea, to busy London, in order that, as the Arab said, they might "teach wisdom" to its people. After despatching these remains, Mr. Layard, in order to preserve the remaining sculptures, was obliged to cause the apartments he had laid open to be filled up again with earth, so that they might be thus protected from the weather, and to prevent also the stones from being carried away by the people of the country, who, feeling no interest in their antiquity, might have used them for building purposes. When he left the mound of Nimroud, it was therefore again impossible to see any traces of the palaces and buildings which it contained, and the long labyrinth of apartments through which he had been accustomed to wander, gazing at its strangely sculptured walls, and passing between the vast portals formed by the gigantic bulls, and lions; all this had now vanished from his sight, and the remembrance of it seemed to him like a dream. Before returning to England, however, Mr. Layard made researches and excavations among some mounds of a similar nature, at a place about eighteen miles from Nimroud, where he also found the remains of apartments decorated with carvings similar in character to those of Nimroud. Here were also kings and warriors, habited in the same fashion of those of Nineveh, with inscriptions of the same character, and idols of the same form. He concluded, indeed, that it was but another portion of the vast city spoken of by ancient histo-

rians, and described in the Bible as of "three days' journey," the palaces it contained being those only of a more recent date, and built by other kings, descendants of the builders of those at Nimroud. Tombs were also found here, containing skeletons, which crumbled to dust when exposed to the air, but showed by the ornaments lying among the bones that they had once been persons of distinction. Here too were found the remains of altars, upon which sacrifice had been offered to the idols, as well as many strange utensils and implements used perhaps in the religious ceremonies of the idolatrous people, and helping to throw still more light upon their strange history and still more strange religion.

And many of these curious things, together with the great sculptured slabs and figures which were floated down the Tigris, have been safely brought to England and placed in our British Museum. Here we can examine for ourselves these interesting representations of the kings and warriors, priests and idols, of a people who held such terrible sway over the earth nearly three thousand years ago; and after seeing all that is thus portrayed of their habits and history, we cannot fail to turn with increased interest to those parts of our Bible which allude to them, and while the sight of these stones may cause us to rejoice that the idols of the heathen nations should be thus overthrown, it should also render us more earnest in serving that one true God, whom the nations of the earth have been taught to know; and in knowing that He "is a Spirit," and that "He dwelleth not in temples made with hands," so should we ever seek to worship him "in spirit and in truth."

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