DAILY CRESCENT.

PROCRASTINATION AND PROMPTITUDE.

[illegible]

Interior of an Assyrian Palace.

The interior of the Assyrian palace must have been as magnificent as imposing. I have led the reader through its reliefs, and he may judge of the impression its halls were calculated to make upon the stranger who, in the days of old, entered, for the first time, the abode of the Assyrian kings. He was ushered in through the portal guarded by the colossal lions or bulls of white alabaster. In the first hall he found himself surrounded by the sculptured records of the empire. Battles, sieges, triumphs, the exploits of the chase, the ceremonies of religion, were portrayed on the walls, sculptured in alabaster, and painted in gorgeous colors. Under each picture were engraved, in characters filled up with bright copper, inscriptions describing the scenes represented. Above the sculptures were painted other events: the king, attended by his eunuchs and warriors, receiving his prisoners, entering into alliances with other monarchs, or performing some sacred duty. These representations were enclosed in colored borders of elaborate and elegant design. The emblematic tree, winged bulls, and monstrous animals, were conspicuous among the ornaments. At the upper end of the hall was the colossal figure of the king in adoration before the Supreme Deity, or receiving from him a mace which he holy cup. He was attended by warriors bearing his arms, and by the priests or presiding divines. His robes, and those of his followers, were adorned with groups of figures, and animals, and flowers, all painted with brilliant colors.

The stranger trod upon alabaster slabs, each bearing an inscription recording the titles, genealogy, and achievements of the great king. Several doorways, formed by gigantic winged lions or bulls, or by the figures of guardian deities, led into apartments, which again opened into more distant halls. In each were new sculptures. On the walls of some were processions of colossal figures, armed men and eunuchs following the king, warriors laden with spoil, leading prisoners, or bearing presents and offerings to the gods. On the wall of others were portrayed the winged priests, or presiding divinities, standing before the sacred trees.

The ceilings above him were divided into square compartments, painted with flowers or with the figures of animals. Some were inlaid with ivory, each compartment being surrounded by elegant borders and mouldings. The beams, as well as the sides of the chambers, may have been gilded, or even plated, with gold and silver; and the rarest woods, in which the cedar was conspicuous, were used for the woodwork. Square openings in the ceilings of the chambers admitted the light of day. A pleasing shadow was thrown over the sculptured walls, and gave a majestic expression to the human features of the colossal forms which guarded the entrances. Through those apertures was seen the bright blue of an eastern sky, enclosed in a frame, on which were painted, in vivid colors, the winged circle, in the midst of elegant ornaments, and the graceful forms of ideal animals.

These edifices, as it has been shown, were great national monuments, upon the walls of which were represented in sculpture, or inscribed in alphabetic characters, the chronicles of the empire. He who entered them might thus read the history and learn the glory and the triumphs of the nation. They served, at the same time, to bring continually to the mind of the inhabitants of the empire the power and majesty of their gods.

Layard's Nineveh.

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