



FIG. 1639.—HANGING GARDENS OF BABYLON.
(Attempt at reconstruction.)

of brick formed the main support of the building. Probably some use was made of piers and columns too. Flights of stairs led to the summit of the building. Each flat contained stately apartments for all sorts of purposes. The walls of these were perhaps adorned with color glories—battle and hunting scenes glowing in yellow, red, brown, and blue. A great mass of earth covered the top of the terraces. When this soil was laid even and smooth it was planted with trees, shrubs and flowers,

“And then were gardens bright with sinuous
rills,
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree,
And forests ancient as the hills.”

Not inappropriate as at first sight, would seem is the comparison of this plantation, in its later days at least, to a primeval

forest. Quintus Curtius asserts that some of the trees grew to be more than twelve feet in diameter. In the days of Amyitis the trees must have been smaller, but the ground was probably more profusely decked with flowers. Aromatic plants most likely grew there, and if the native flora of the country was not denied a place among the vegetable novelties from abroad, the date palm with its crown of splendid leaves and charming amber clusters of fruit hanging down several feet in length, adorned the slopes. The pomegranate with its scarlet flowers, the graceful acacia, the mournful willow, the long feathery rods of the tamarisk, the cone-like cypress, the orange and the apple tree, very likely brightened its groves. In the burning climate of the country, the shade and cool-

ness of the place was delicious. The water for the gardens was supplied from a canal from the Euphrates, and was raised by a screw hidden away in a room within the structure. Mr. Rassam a few years ago found, at the mound Babel, four “exquisitely built granite wells,” still some 140 feet high, which he concludes were the pipes used in irrigating the Hanging gardens. Huge rocks were elevated to the gardens to give a mountain like appearance.

Passing on to Roman times we find that this iron race delighted in their gardens, to show their mastery over nature by a display of engineering skill. Lucullus suspended hills upon vast tunnels and brought in the sea for moats and