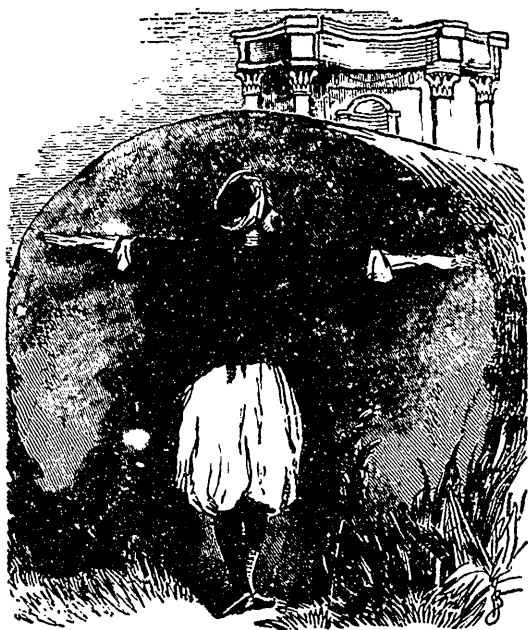


an earthquake shattered its lintel and allowed the ponderous keystone to slip down several feet, as shown in our cut. There it hung for more than a hundred years, a huge block eleven feet high, 12 feet thick, and 6 feet broad, weighing about sixty tons. The British Consul at Damascus, however, built the pier of masonry by which it is now supported. The exquisite and elaborate carving of the mouldings, and volutes are beyond all praise. There are ears of corn, grapes and vine leaves, while genii lurk behind the intertwining vines.

"A more exquisitely beautiful view," says Dr. Jessop, "than that through this portal, looking into this lavish treasure-house of sculpture, cannot be found in the East or West." At the further end is the sanctum or holy place for the altar, with doors leading down to vaults where the priests uttered their mysterious oracles. On either side of the portal is a spiral stair, by whose broken steps we climbed to the top, which still bears a dilapidated Turkish fort, and beneath us, like a map, lay the wide area bestrewn with crumbling ruins. Twenty-two of the columns are



A FALLEN PILLAR, BAALBEK.

still in position. One has been hurled by earthquake against the wall, but so firmly were its joints clamped with iron, that it still remains unbroken. The arched roof of the arcade around this temple was carved into hexagonal panels, each containing busts or scaly-winged dragons, with horrid hair like the Medusa's head.

But the marvels of these colossal structures are not yet exhausted. The cyclopean wall which surrounds the acropolis is still more astounding. In this massy wall are seven huge stones, measuring thirty feet in length, thirteen in height and ten in breadth, and upon them, twenty feet above the ground, rest the