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PRISONERS OF STATE AT BORO BOEDOR



THE fact is not generally appreciated that there are ruins of Buddhist and Brahmanic temples in Middle Java surpassing in extent and magnificence anything to be seen in Egypt or India. There, in the heart of the steaming tropics, in that summer land of the world below the equator, on an island where volcanoes cluster more thickly and vegetation is richer than in any other region of the globe, where earthquakes continually rock and shatter, and where deluges descend during the rainy half of the year, remains nearly intact the temple of Boro Boedor, covering almost the same area as the Great Pyramid of Gizeh. It is ornamented with hundreds of life-size statues and miles of bas-reliefs presenting the highest examples of Greco-Buddhist art—a sculptured record of all the arts and industries, the culture and civilization, of the golden age of Java, of the life of the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries in all the farther East—a record that is not written in hieroglyphs, but in plainest pictures carved by sculptor's chisel. That solid pyramidal

temple, rising in magnificent sculptured terraces, that was built without mortar or cement, without column or pillar or arch, is one of the surviving wonders of the world. On the spot it seems a veritable miracle.

It is one of the romances of Buddhism that this splendid monument of human industry, abandoned by its worshipers as one cult succeeded another, and forgotten after the Mohammedan conquest imposed yet another creed upon the people, should have disappeared completely, hidden in the tangle of tropical vegetation, a formless, nameless, unsuspected mound in the heart of a jungle, lost in every way, with no part in the life of the land, finally to be uncovered to the sight of the nineteenth century. When Sir Stamford Raffles came as British governor of Java in 1811, the Dutch had possessed the island for two centuries, but in their greed for gulden had paid no heed to the people, and knew nothing of that earlier time before the conquest when the island was all one empire, the arts and literature flourished, and, inspired by Hindu influence, Javanese civilization reached its highest estate; nor did the Hollander allow any alien investigators to peer about this profitable plantation. Sir Stamford Raffles, in his five years of control, did a century's work. He explored, excavated, and surveyed the ruined temples, and searching the voluminous archives of the native princes, drew from the mass of romantic legends and poetic records the first "History of Java." His officers copied and deciphered inscriptions, and gradually worked out all the history of the great ruins, and determined the date of their erection at the beginning of the seventh century.

At this time Sir Stamford wrote: "The interior of Java contains temples that, as works of labor and art, dwarf to nothing all our wonder and admiration at the pyramids of Egypt." Then Alfred Russel Wallace said: "The number and beauty of the architectural remains in Java . . . far surpass those of Central America, and perhaps even those of India." And of Boro Boedor he wrote: "The amount of human labor and skill expended on the Great Pyramid of Egypt sinks into insignificance when compared with that required to complete this sculptured hill-temple in the interior of Java." Herr Brumund called Boro Boedor "the most remarkable and magnificent monument Buddhism has ever erected"; and Fergusson, in his "History of Indian and Eastern Architecture," finds in that edifice the highest development of Buddhist art, an epitome of all its arts and ritual, and the culmination of the architectural style which, originating at Barhut a thousand years before, had begun to decay in India at the time the colonists were erecting this masterpiece of the ages in the heart of Java.

There is yet no Baedeker, or Murray, or local red book to lead one to and about the temples and present every dry detail of fact. The references to the ruins in books of travel and general literature are vague or cautious generalities, absurd misstatements, or guesses. In the great libraries of the world's capitals the archaeologists' reports are rare, and on the island only Dutch editions are available. Fergusson is one's only portable guide and aid to understanding; but as he never visited the stupendous ruin, his is but a formal record of the main facts. Dutch scientists criticize

Sir Stamford Raffles's work and all that Von Humboldt and Lassen deduced from it concerning Javanese religion and mythology. They entirely put aside all native histories and traditions, searching and accepting only Chinese and Arabic works, and making a close study of ancient inscriptions, upon the rendering of which few of the Dutch savants agree.

We had applied for new *toelatings-kaarten*, or admission tickets, to the interior of the island; and as they had not arrived by the afternoon before we intended leaving Buitenzorg, we drove to the assistant resident's to inquire. "You shall have them this evening," said that gracious and courtly official, standing beside the huge carriage; "but as it is only the merest matter of form, go right along in the morning, ladies, anyhow, and I shall send the papers after you by post. To Tissak Malaya? No? Well, then, to Djokjakarta."

Upon that advice we proceeded on our journey, crossed the Preangers, saw the plain of Leles, and made our brief visit to Tissak Malaya. We rode for a long, hot day across the swamps and low-lying jungles of the *terra ingrata* of Middle Java, and just before sunset we reached Djokjakarta, a provincial capital, where the native sultan resides in great state, but poor imitation of independent rulership. We had tea served us under the great portico of the Hotel Toegoe, our every movement followed by the uncivilized piazza stare of some Dutch residents—that gaze of the summer hotel that has no geographic or racial limit, which even occurs on the American littoral, and in Java has a fixedness born of stolid Dutch ancestry, and an intensity due to the tropical fervor

of the thermometer, that put it far beyond all other species of unwinking scrutiny. The bovine, ruminant gaze of those stout women, continued and continued past all provincial-colonial curiosity as to the cut and stuff of our gowns, drove us to the garden paths, already twinkling with fireflies. The landlord joined us there, and strolled with us out to the street and along a line of torch-lighted booths and shops, where native products and native life were most picturesquely presented. Our landlord made himself very agreeable in explaining it all, walked on as far as the gates of the sultan's palace, plying us with the most point-blank personal questions, our whence, whither, why, for how long, etc.; but we did not mind that in a land of stares and interrogative English. He showed us the carriage we could have for the next day's twenty-five-mile drive to Boro Boedor—"if you go," with quite unnecessary emphasis on the phrase of doubt. He finally brought us back to the portico, disappeared for a time, and returning, said: "Ladies, the assistant resident wishes to meet you. Will you come this way?" And the courteous one conducted us through lofty halls and porticos to his own half-office parlor, all of us pleased at this unexpected attention from the provincial official.

A tall, grim, severe man in the dark cloth clothes of ceremony, with uniform buttons, waved a semi-military cap, and said curtly: "Ladies, it is my duty to inform you that you have no permission to visit Djokja."

It took some repetitions for us to get the whole sensation of the heavens suddenly falling on us, to learn that a telegram had come from official headquarters

at Buitenzorg to warn him that three American ladies would arrive that afternoon, without passports, to visit Djokja.

“Certainly not, because those Buitenzorg officials told us not to wait for the passports—that they would mail them after us.” Then ensued the most farcical scene, a grand burlesque rendering of the act of apprehending criminals, or rather political suspects. The assistant resident tried to maintain the stern, judicial manner of a police-court magistrate, cross-examining us as closely as if it were testimony in a murder trial we were giving, and was not at all inclined to admit that there could be any mistake in the elaborately perfect system of Dutch colonial government. Magnificently he told us that we could not remain in Djokja, and we assured him that we had no wish to do so, that we were leaving for Boro Boedor in the morning. The Pickwickian message from Buitenzorg had not given any instructions. It merely related that we should arrive. We had arrived, and the assistant resident evidently did not know just what to do next. At any rate, he intended that we should stand in awe of him and the government of Netherlands India. He “supposed” that it was intended that we should be sent straight back to Buitenzorg. We demurred, in fact refused—the two inflammable, impolitic ones of us, who paid no heed to the gentle, gray-haired elder member of our party, who was all resignation and humility before the terrible official. We produced our United States passports, and quite as much as told him that he and the noble army of Dutch officials might finish the discussion with the Amer-

ican consul; we had other affairs, and were bound for Boro Boedor. He waved the United States passports aside, curtly said they were of "no account," examined the letters of credit with a shade more of interest, and gave his whole attention to my "Smithsonian passport" or general letter "to all friends of science." That beautifully written document, with its measured phrases, many polysyllabic words in capital letters, and the big gold seal of Saint-Gaudens's designing, worked a spell; and after slowly reading all the commendatory sentences of that great American institution "for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men," he read it again:

"Hum-m-m! Hum-m-m! The Smithsonian Institution of Washington—National Geographic Society—scientific observation and study—anthropology—photography—G. Brown Goode, acting secretary! Ah, ladies, since you have such credentials as *this*,"—evidently the Smithsonian Institution has better standing abroad than the Department of State, and G. Brown Goode, acting secretary of the one, was a better name to conjure with away from home than Walter Q. Gresham, actual secretary of the other,— "since you come so highly commended to us, I will allow you to proceed to Boro Boedor, and remain there while I report to Buitenzorg and ask for instructions. You will go to Boro Boedor as early as possible in the morning," he commanded, and then asked, "How long had you intended to remain there?"

"That depends. If it is comfortable, and the rains keep off, we may stay several days. If not, we return to-morrow evening."

“No, no, no!” he cried in alarm; “you must stay there at Boro Boedor. You have no permission to visit Djokja, and I cannot let you stay in my residency. You must stay at Boro Boedor or go back to Buitenzorg.”

To be ordered off to the Buddhist shrine at sunrise put the pilgrimage in quite another light; to be sentenced to Nirvana by a local magistrate in brass buttons was not like arriving there by slow stages—meditation and reincarnation; but as the assistant resident seemed to be on the point of repenting his clemency, we acquiesced, and the great man and his minions drove away, the bearer of the *pajong*, or official umbrella of his rank, testifying to the formal character of the visit he had been paying. The landlord mopped his brow, sighed, and looked like one who had survived great perils; and we then saw that his sight-seeing stroll down the street with us had been a ruse, a little clever scouting, a preliminary reconnaissance for the benefit of the puzzled magistrate.

We left Djokja at sunrise, with enthusiasm somewhat dampened from former anticipations of that twenty-five-mile drive to Boro Boedor, “the aged thing” in the Boro district of Kedu Residency, or Bára Budha, “Great Buddha.” We had expected to realize a little of the pleasure of travel during the barely ended posting days on this garden island, networked over with smooth park drives all shaded with tamarind-, kanari-, teak-, and waringen-trees, and it proved a half-day of the greatest interest and enjoyment. Our canopied carriage was drawn by four little rats of ponies, driven by a serious old coachman in a

gay sarong and military jacket, with a huge lacquered vizor or crownless hat tied on over his battek turban, like a student's exaggerated eye-shade. This gave the shadow of great dignity and owlish wisdom to his wrinkled face, ornamented by a mustache as sparsely and symmetrically planted as walrus whiskers. He held the reins and said nothing. When there was anything to do, the running footman did it—a lithe little creature who clung to a rear step, and took to his heels every few minutes to crack the whip over the ponies' heads, and with a frenzied "Gree! G-r-r-ee! Gr-r-r-e-e-e!" urge the mites to a more breakneck gallop in harness. He steered them by the traces as he galloped beside them, guided them over bridges, around corners, past other vehicles, and through crowds, while the driver held the reins and chewed betel tobacco in unconcerned state. We rocked and rolled through beautiful arched avenues, with this bare-legged boy in gay petticoat "gr-r-ree-ing" us along like mad, people scattering aside like frightened chickens, and kneeling as we passed by. The way was fenced and hedged and finished, to each blade of grass, like some aristocratic suburb of a great capital, an endless park, or continuous estate, where fancy farming and landscape-gardening had gone their most extravagant lengths. There was not a neglected acre on either side for all the twenty-five miles; every field was cultivated like a tulip-bed; every plant was as green and perfect as if entered in a horticultural show. Streams, ravines, and ditches were solidly bridged, each with its white cement parapet and smooth concrete flooring, and each numbered and marked with

Dutch preciseness; and along every bit of the road were posted the names of the kampongs and estates charged to maintain the highway in its perfect condition. Telegraph- and telephone-wires were strung on the rigid arms of cotton-trees, and giant creepers wove solid fences as they were trained from tree-trunk to tree-trunk—the tropics tamed, combed, and curbed, hitched to the cart of commerce and made man's abject servant.

Every few miles there were open red-tiled pavilions built over the highways as refuges for man and beast from the scorching sun of one season and the cloud-burst showers of the rainy half of the year. Twice we found busy passers going on in groves beside these rest-houses—picturesque gatherings of men, women, and children, and displays of fowls, fruits, nuts, vegetables, grain, sugar, spices, gums, and flowers, that tempted one to linger and enjoy, and to photograph every foot of the passer's area. The main road was crowded all the way like a city street, and around these passers the highway hummed with voices. One can believe in the density of the population—450 to the square mile¹—when he sees the people trooping along these country roads; and he can well understand why every foot of land is cultivated, how even in the benevolent land of the banana every one must produce something, must work or starve. The better sanitary condition of the native kampongs is given as

¹ Holland has a population of 359 to the square mile (December 31, 1892), and Belgium a population of 540 to the square mile. French statisticians are confident that Java will soon surpass Belgium in the density of its population.



WAYSIDE PAVILION ON POST-ROAD.

a great factor in the remarkable increase of population in the last half-century; but it took many years of precept and example, strict laws, and a rating of native rulers and village chiefs according to the cleanliness of their kampongs, before the native hamlets became tropical counterparts of Broek and the other absurdly clean towns of Holland. These careless children of the tropics are obliged to whitewash their houses twice a year, look to their drains and debris, and use disinfectants; and with the dainty little basket houses, one of which may be bought outright for five dollars, and the beautiful palms and shrubberies to serve as screens from rice-field vapors, each little kampong is a delight in every way.

Men and boys toiled to the passer, bent over with the weight of one or two monstrous jack-fruits or durians on their backs. A woman with a baby swinging in the slandang over her shoulder had tied cackling chickens to the back of her belt, and trudged on comfortably under her umbrella; and a boy swung a brace of ducks from each end of a shoulder-pole, and trotted gaily to the passer. The kampongs, or villages, when not hidden in palm- and plantain-groves behind fancy bamboo fences, were rows of open houses on each side of the highway, and we reviewed native life at leisure while the ponies were changed. The friendly, gentle little brown people welcomed us with amused and embarrassed smiles when our curiosity as to sarong-painting, lacquering, and mat-weaving carried us into the family circle. The dark, round-eyed, star-eyed babies and children showed no fear or shyness, and the tiniest ones—their

soft little warm brown bodies bare of ever a garment save the cotton slandang in which they cuddle so confidently under the mother's protecting arm—let us lift and carry and play with them at will.

We left the main road, and progressed by a narrower way between open fields of pepper, manioc, indigo, and tobacco, with picturesque views of the three symmetrical and beautiful mountains, Soembung, Merbaboe, and Merapi—the first and largest one as pure in line, as exquisite and ideal a peak, as Fujiyama, and the others sloping splendidly in soft volcanic outlines. Soembung is the very center of Java, and native legends cling to the little hill of Tidar at its base—the “spike of the universe,” the nail which fastens the lovely island to the face of the earth. Merbaboe, the “ash-ejecting,” has wrought ruin in its time, and a faint white plume of steam waves from its summit still. The capitulations which delivered the Napoleonic possessions of the Dutch East Indies to England in 1811 were signed at the base of Merbaboe, and in our then frame of mind toward the Dutch government we wished to make a pilgrimage of joyous celebration to the spot. The third of the graceful peaks, Merapi, the “fire-throwing,” was a sacred peak in Buddhist times, when cave-temples were hewn in its solid rock and their interiors fretted over with fine bas-reliefs. A group of people transplanting rice, a little boy driving a flock of geese down the road, a little open-timbered temple of the dead in a frangipani-grove—all these, with the softly blue-and-purple mountains in the background, are pictures in enduring memory of that morning's ride toward Nirvana.

A gray ruin showed indistinctly on a hilltop, and after a run through a long, arched avenue we came out suddenly at the base of the hill-temple. Instead of a mad, triumphant sweep around the great pyramid, the ponies balked, rooted themselves past any lashing or "gr-r-ree-ing," and we got out and walked under the noonday sun, around the hoary high altar of Buddha, down an avenue of tall kanari-trees, lined with statues, gargoyles, and other such *recha*, or remains of ancient art, to the passagrahan, or government rest-house.