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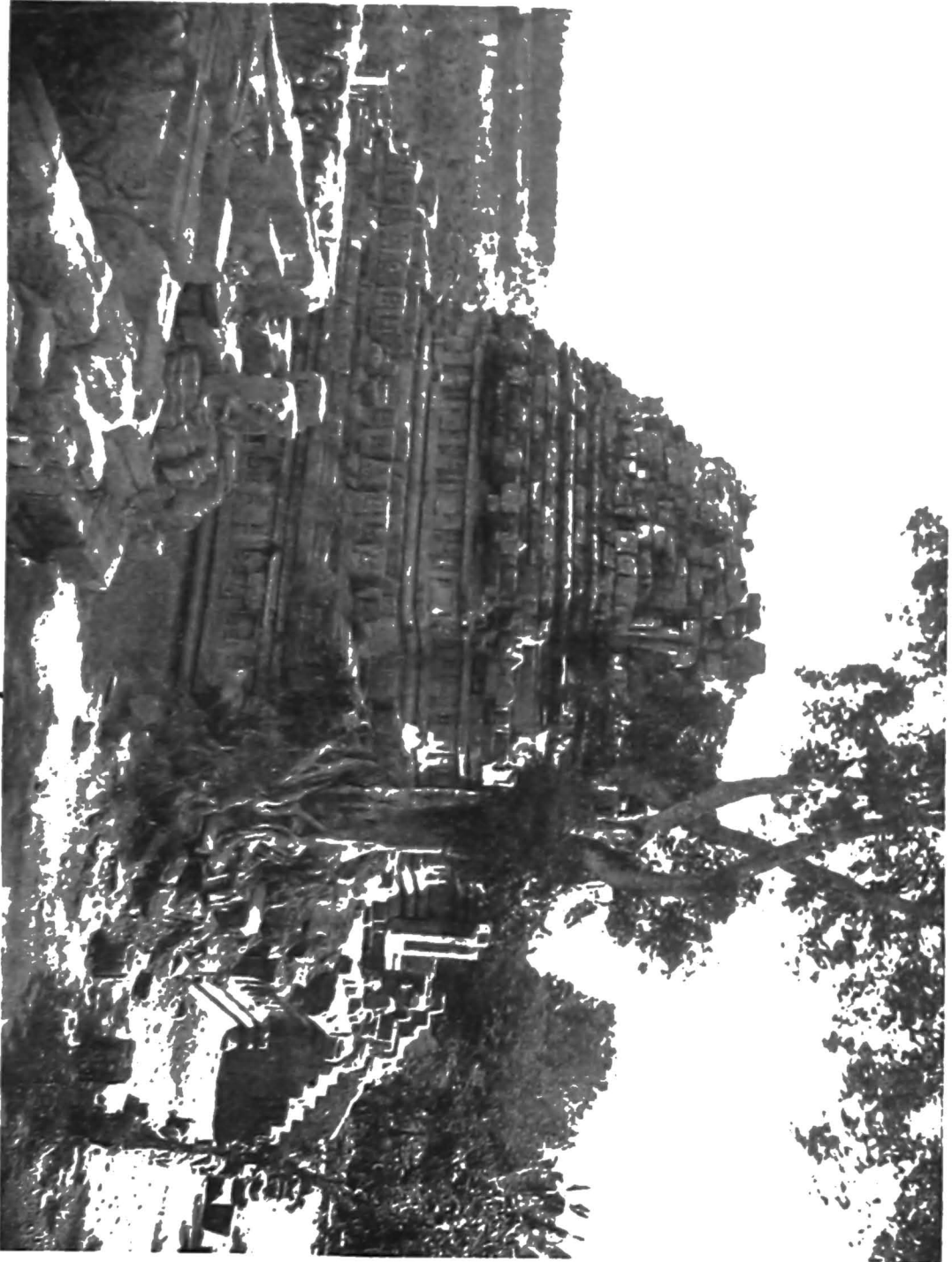
BRAMBANAM

“In the whole course of my life I have never met with such stupendous and finished specimens of human labor and of the science and taste of ages long since forgot, crowded together in so small a compass, as in this little spot [Brambanam], which, to use a military phrase, I deem to have been the headquarters of Hinduism in Java.” (Report to Sir Stamford Raffles by Captain George Baker of the Bengal establishment.)



HERE are ruins of more than one hundred and fifty temples in the historic region lying between Djokjakarta and Soerakarta, or Djokja and Solo, as common usage abbreviates those syllables of unnecessary exertion in this steaming, endless mid-summer land of Middle Java. As the train races on the twenty miles from Djokja to Brambanam, there is a tantalizing glimpse of the ruined temples at Kalasan; and one small temple there, the Chandi Kali Bening, ranks as the gem of Hindu art in Java. It is entirely covered, inside as well as outside, with bas-reliefs and ornamental carvings which surpass in elaboration and artistic merit everything else in this region, where re-

TEMPLE OF LOJO JONGGIRAN AT BRAMBANAN.





finest ornament and lavish decoration reached their limit at the hands of the early Hindu sculptors. The Sepoy soldiers who came with the British engineers were lost in wonder at Kalasan, where the remains of Hindu art so far surpassed anything they knew in India itself; while the extent and magnificence of Brambanam's Brahmanic and Buddhist temple ruins amaze every visitor—even after Boro Boedor.

We had intended to drive from Boro Boedor across country to Brambanam, but, affairs of state obliging us to return from our Nirvana directly to Djokja, we fell back upon the railroad's promised convenience. In this guide-bookless land, where every white resident knows every crook and turn in Amsterdam's streets, and next to nothing about the island of Java, a kind dispenser of misinformation had told us that the railway-station of Brambanam was close beside the temple ruins; and we had believed him. The railway had been completed and formally opened but a few days before our visit, and our Malay servant was also quite sure that the road ran past the temples, and that the station was at their very gates.

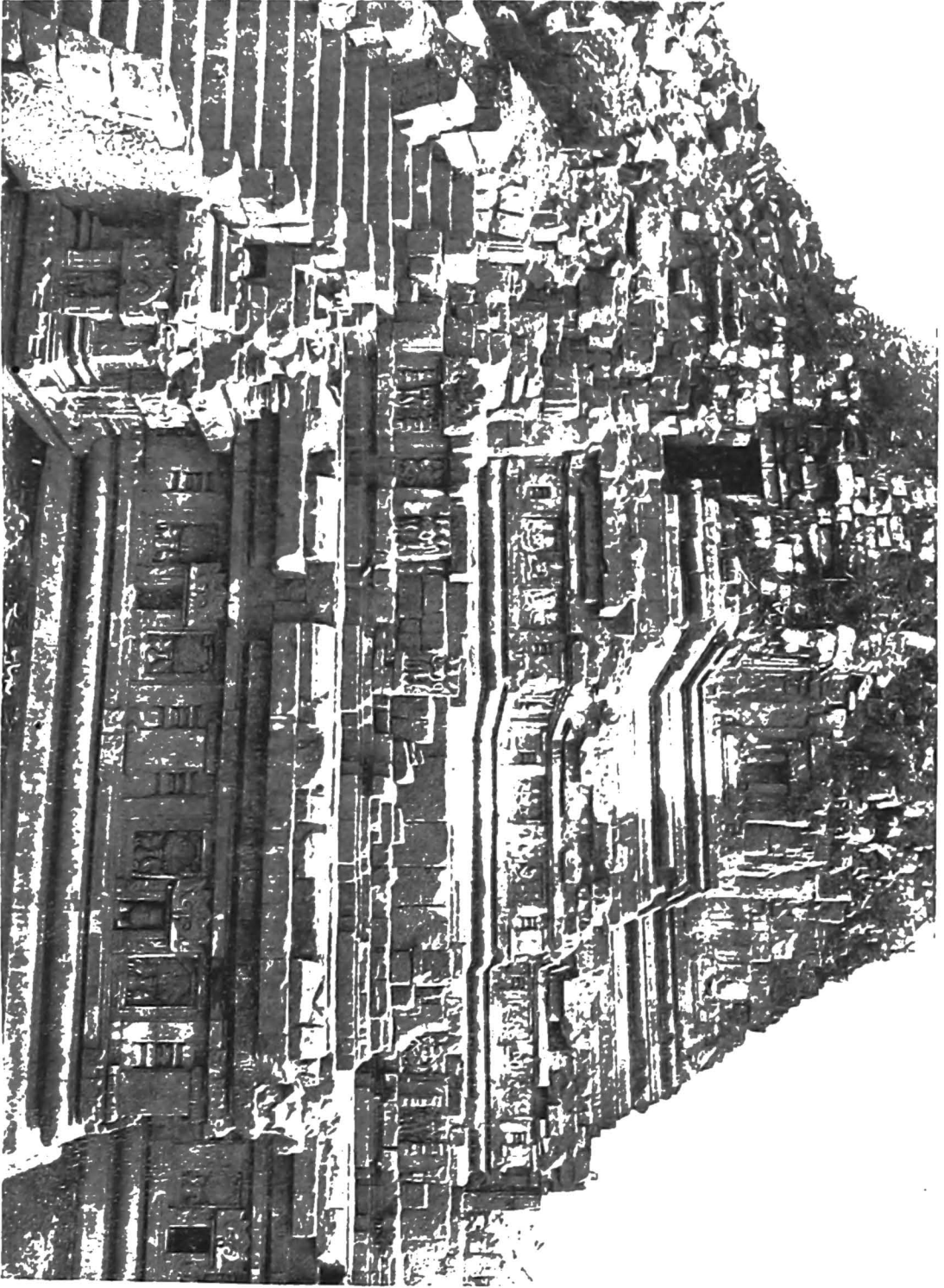
When the train had shrieked away from the lone little station building, we learned that the ruins were a mile distant, with no sort of a vehicle nor an animal nor a palanquin to be had; and archæological zeal suffered a chill even in that tropic noonday. The station-master was all courtesy and sympathy; but the choice for us lay between walking or waiting at the station four hours for the next train on to Solo.

We strolled very slowly along the broad, open country road under the deadly, direct rays of the midday

sun,—at the time when, as the Hindus say, “only Englishmen and dogs are abroad,”—reaching at last a pretty village and the grateful shade of tall kanari-trees, where the people were lounging at ease at the close of the morning’s busy passer. Every house, shed, and stall had made use of carved temple stones for its foundations, and the road was lined with more such recha—artistic remains from the inexhaustible storehouse and quarry of the neighboring ruins. Piles of tempting fruit remained for sale, and brown babies sprawled content on the warm lap of earth, the tiniest ones eating the green edge of watermelon-rind with avidity, and tender mothers cramming cold sweet potato into the mouths of infants two and four months old. There was such an easy, enviable tropical calm of abundant living and leisure in that Lilliput village under Brobdingnag trees that I longed to fling away my “Fergusson,” let slip life’s one golden, glowing, scorching opportunity to be informed on ninth-century Brahmanic temples, and, putting off all starched and unnecessary garments of white civilization, join that lifelong, happy-go-lucky, care-free picnic party under the kanari-trees of Brambanam; but—

A turn in the road, a break in the jungle at one side of the highway, disclosed three pyramidal temples in a vast square court, with the ruins of three corresponding temples, all fallen to rubbish-heaps, ranged in line facing them. These ruined piles alone remain of the group of twenty temples dedicated to Loro Jonggran, “the pure, exalted virgin” of the Javanese, worshiped in India as Deva, Durga, Kali, or Parvati. Even the three temples that are best preserved have crumbled

CLEARING AWAY RUBBISH AND VEGETATION AT BRAMHANYAM TEMPLES.

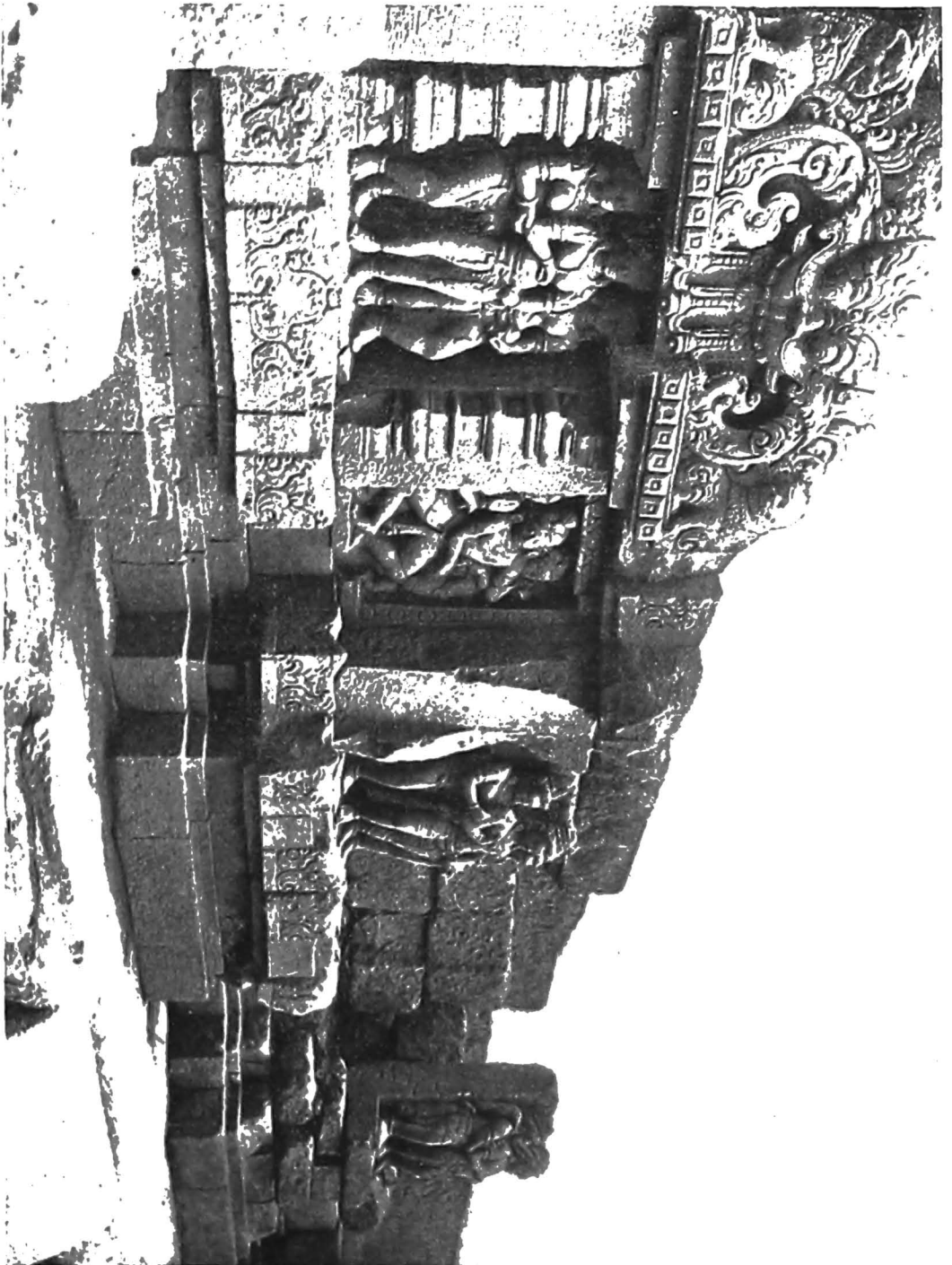


at their summits and lost their angles ; but enough remains for the eye to reconstruct the symmetrical piles and carry out the once perfect lines. The structures rise in terraces and broad courses, tapering like the Dravidian gopuras of southern India, and covered, like them, with images, bas-reliefs, and ornamental carvings. Grand staircases ascend from each of the four sides to square chapels or alcoves half-way up in the solid body of the pyramid, and each chapel once contained an image. The main or central temple now remaining still enshrines in its west or farther chamber an image of Ganesha, the hideous elephant-headed son of Siva and Parvati. Broken images of Siva and Parvati were found in the south and north chambers, and Brahma is supposed to have been enshrined in the great east chapel. An adjoining temple holds an exquisite statue of Loro Jonggran, "the maiden with the beautiful hips," who stands, graceful and serene, in a roofless chamber, smiling down like a true goddess upon those who toil up the long carved staircase of approach. Her particular temple is adorned with bas-reliefs, where the *gopis*, or houris, who accompany Krishna, the dancing youth, are grouped in graceful poses. One of these bas-reliefs, commonly known as the "Three Graces" has great fame, and one and two thousand gulden have been vainly offered by British travelers anxious to transport it to London. Another temple contains an image of Nandi, the sacred bull ; but the other shrines have fallen in shapeless ruins, and nothing of their altar-images is to be gathered from the rubbish-heaps that cover the vast temple court.

The pity of all this ruined splendor moves one strongly, and one deploras the impossibility of reconstructing, even on paper, the whole magnificent place of worship. The wealth of ornament makes all other temple buildings seem plain and featureless, and one set of bas-reliefs just rescued and set up in line, depicting scenes from the Ramayan, would be treasure enough for an art museum. On this long series of carved stones disconsolate Rama is shown searching everywhere for Sita, his stolen wife, until the king of the monkeys, espousing his cause, leads him to success. The story is wonderfully told in stone, the chisel as eloquent as the pen, and everywhere one reads as plainly the sacred tales and ancient records. The graceful figures and their draperies tell of Greek influences acting upon those northern Hindus who brought the religion to the island; and the beautifully conventionalized trees and fruits and flowers, the mythical animals and gaping monsters along the staircases, the masks, arabesques, bands, scrolls, ornamental keystones, and all the elaborate symbols and attributes of deities lavished on this group of temples, constitute a whole gallery of Hindu art, and a complete grammar of its ornament.

These temples, it is believed, were erected at the beginning of the ninth century, and fixed dates in the eleventh century are also claimed; but at least they were built soon after the completion of Boro Boedor, when the people were turning back to Brahmanism, and Hindu arts had reached their richest development at this great capital of Mendang Kumulan, since called Brambanam. The fame of the Javanese empire had

KRISHNA AND THE THREE GRACES



then gone abroad, and greed for its riches led Khublai Khan to despatch an armada to its shores; but his Chinese commander, Mengki, returned without ships or men, his face branded like a thief's. Another expedition was defeated, with a loss of three thousand men, and the Great Khan's death put an end to further schemes of conquest. Marco Polo, windbound for five months on Sumatra, then Odoric, and the Arab Ibn Batuta who visited Java in the fourteenth century, continued to celebrate the riches and splendor of this empire, and invite its conquest, until Arab priests and traders began its overthrow. Its princes were conquered, its splendid capitals destroyed, and with the conversion of the people to Mohammedanism the shrines were deserted, soon overgrown, and became hillocks of vegetation. The waringen-tree's fibrous roots, penetrating the crevices of stones that were only fitted together, and not cemented, have done most damage, and the shrines of Loro Jonggran went fast to utter ruin.

A Dutch engineer, seeking to build a fort in the disturbed country between the two native capitals, first reported these Brambanam temples in 1797; but it was left for Sir Stamford Raffles to have them excavated, surveyed, sketched, and reported upon. Then for eighty years—until the year of our visit—they had again been forgotten, and the jungle claimed and covered the beautiful monuments. The Archæological Society of Djokja had just begun the work of clearing off and rescuing the wonderful carvings, and groups of coolies were resting in the shade, while others potttered around, setting bas-reliefs in regular lines around

the rubbish-heaps they had been taken from. This salvage corps chattered and watched us with well-contained interest, as we, literally at the very boiling-point of enthusiasm, at three o'clock of an equatorial afternoon, toiled up the magnificent staircases, peered into each shrine, made the rounds of the sculptured terraces, or processional paths, and explored the whole splendid trio of temples, without pause.

Herr Perk, the director of the works, and curator of this monumental museum, roused by the rumors of foreign invasion, welcomed us to the grateful shade of his temporary quarters beside the temple, and hospitably shared his afternoon tea and bananas with us, there surrounded by a small museum of the finest and most delicately carved fragments, that could not safely be left unprotected. While we cooled, and rested from the long walk and the eager scramble over the ruins, we enjoyed too the series of Cephas's photographs made for the Djokja Society, and in them had evidence how the insidious roots of the graceful waringen-trees had split and scattered the fitted stones as thoroughly as an earthquake; yet each waringengripped ruin, the clustered roots streaming, as if once liquid, over angles and carvings, was so picturesque that we half regretted the entire uprooting of these lovely trees.

When the director was called away to his workmen, we bade our guiding Mohammedan lead the way to Chandi Sewou, the "Thousand Temples," or great Buddhist shrine of the ancient capital. "Oh," he cried, "it is far, far from here—an hour to walk. You must go to Chandi Sewou in a boat. The water is

LOHO JONGGRAN AND HER ATTENDANTS.



up to here," touching his waist, "and there are many, many snakes." Distrusting, we made him lead on in the direction of Chandi Sewou; perhaps we might get at least a distant view. When we had walked the length of a city block down a shady road, with carved fragments and overgrown stones scattered along the way and through the young jungle at one side, we turned a corner, walked another block, and stood between the giant images that guard the entrance of Chandi Sewou's great quadrangle.

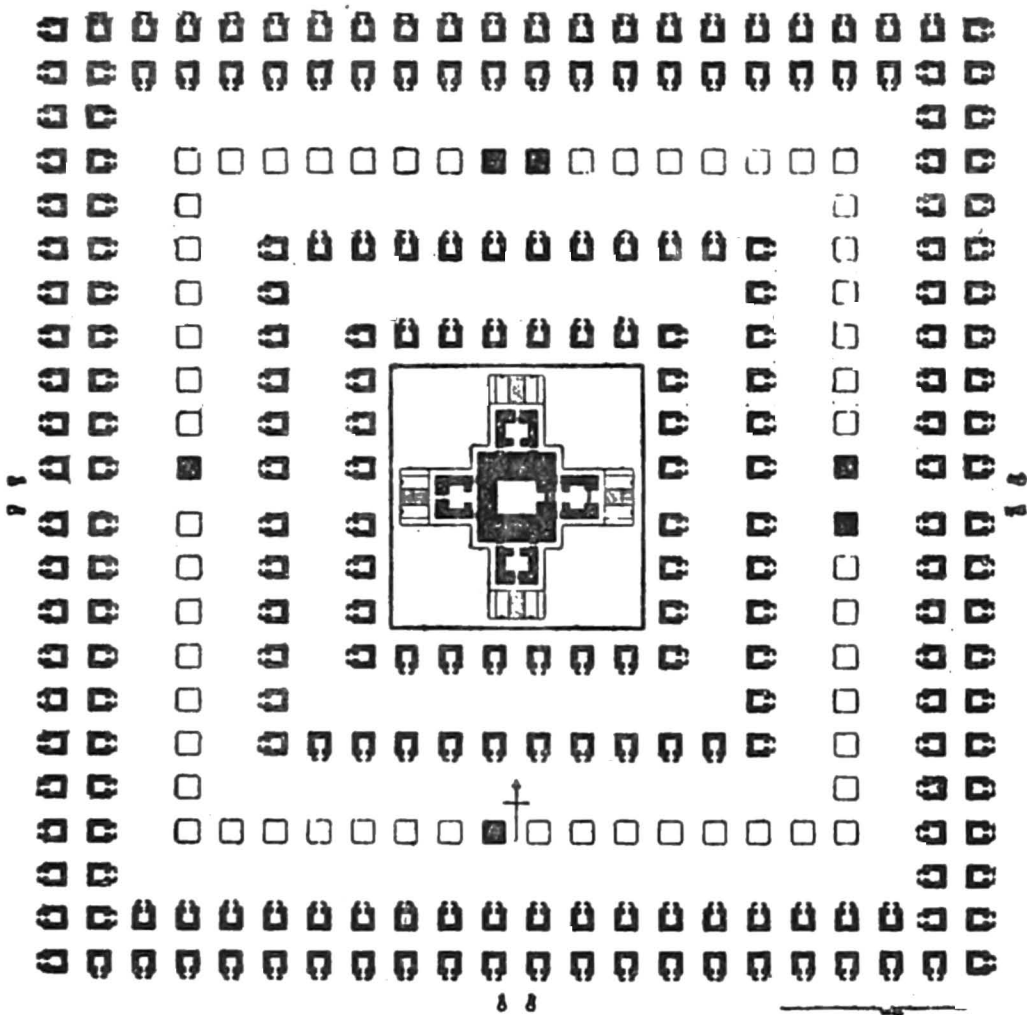
The "Thousand Temples" were really but two hundred and thirty-six temples, built in five quadrilateral lines around a central cruciform temple, the whole walled inclosure measuring five hundred feet either way. Many of these lesser shrines—mere confessional boxes in size—are now ruined or sunk entirely in the level turf that covers the whole quadrangle, and others are picturesque, vine-wreathed masses, looking most like the standing chimneys of a burnt house. This Buddhist sanctuary of the eleventh century has almost the same general plan as Boro Boedor, but a Boro Boedor spread out and built all on the one level. The five lines of temples, with broad processional paths between them, correspond to the five square terraces of Boro Boedor; and the six superior chapels correspond to the circles of latticed dagobas near Boro Boedor's summit. The empty central shrine at Chandi Sewou has crumbled to a heap of stones, with only its four stepped-arch entrance-doors distinct; and the smaller temples, each of them eleven feet square and eighteen feet high, with inner walls covered with bas-reliefs, are empty as well. When the British officers surveyed Chandi Se-

wou, five of the chapels contained cross-legged images seated on lotus pedestals—either Buddha, or the *tirthankars*, or Jain saints; but even those headless and mutilated statues are missing now. Every evidence could be had of wilful destruction of the group of shrines, and the same mysterious well-hole was found beneath the pedestal of the image in each chapel—whether as receptacle for the ashes of priests and princes; a place for the safe keeping of temple treasures; as an empty survival of the form of the earliest tree-temples, when the mystery of animate nature commanded man's worship; or, as M. de Charnay suggests, the orifice from which proceeded the voice of the concealed priest who served as oracle.

With these Brambanam temples, when Sivaism or Jainism had succeeded Buddhism, and even before Mohammedanism came, the decadence of arts and letters began. The Arab conquest made it complete, and the art of architecture died entirely, no structures since that time redeeming the people and religion which in India and Spain have left such monuments of beauty.

The ruins of the "Thousand Temples" are more lonely and deserted in their grassy, weed-grown quadrangle, more forlorn in their abandonment, than any other of the splendid relics of Java's past religions. The glorious company of saintly images are vanished past tracing, and the rows of little sentry-box chapels give a different impression from the soaring pyramids of solid stone, with their hundreds of statues and figures and the wealth of sculptured ornament, found elsewhere. The vast level of the plain around it is a lake or swamp in

the rainy season, and the damp little chapels, with their rubbish-heaps in dark corners and the weed-grown well-hole, furnish ideal homes for snakes. As our Mohammedan had suggested snakes, we imagined them everywhere, stepping carefully, throwing stones



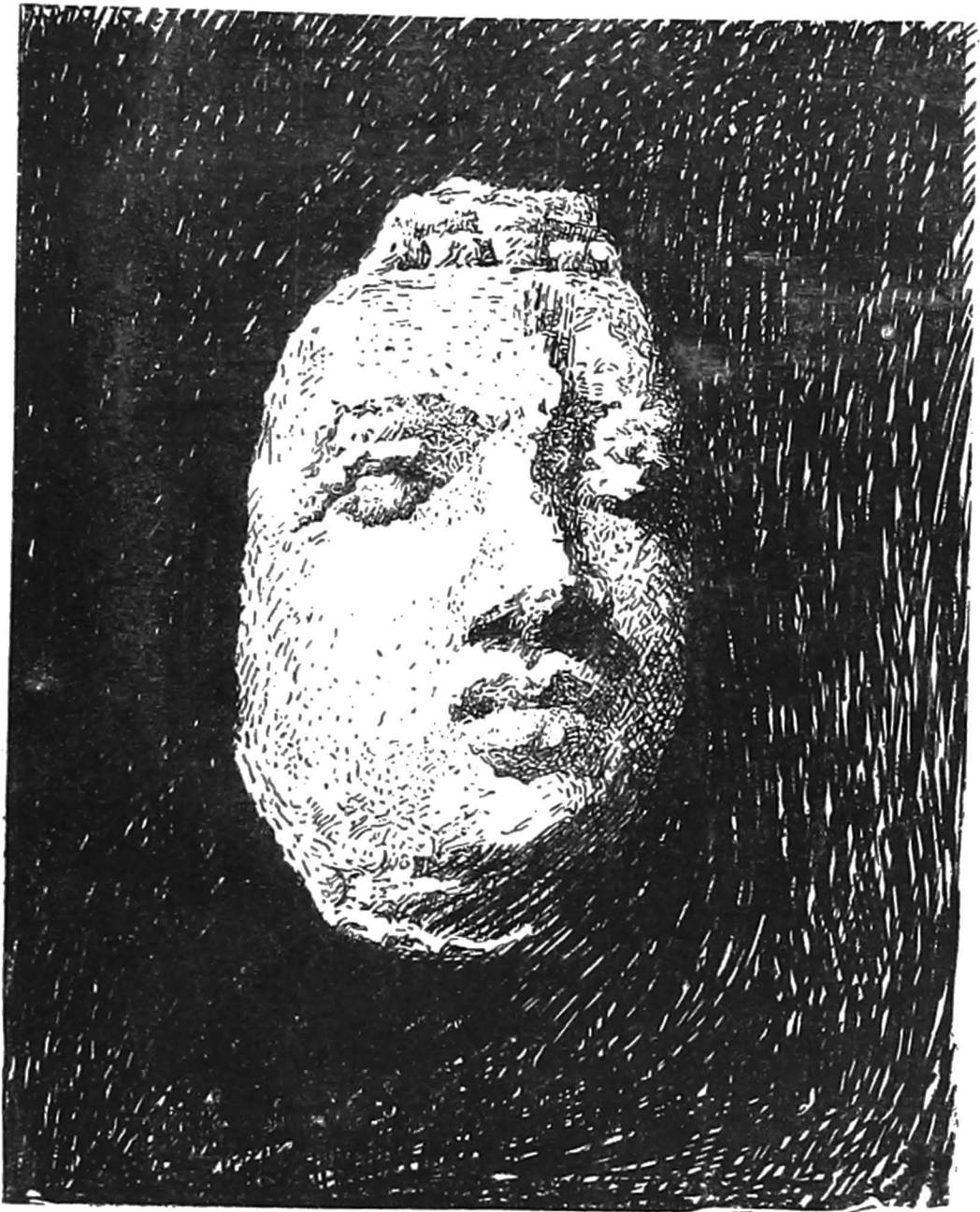
PLAN OF CHANDI SEWOU ("THOUSAND TEMPLES")

From Sir Stamford Raffles's "History of Java."

ahead of us, and thrusting our umbrellas noisily into each chapel before we ventured within; but the long-anticipated, always expected great snake did not materialize to give appropriate incident to a visit to such complete ruins. Only one small wisp of a lizard gave

the least starting-point for a really thrilling traveler's tale. The only other moving object in sight at Chandi Sewou was a little girl, with a smaller sister astride of her hip, who followed us timidly and sat for a time resting on the knee of one of the hideous gate guardians—one of the Gog and Magog stone monsters, who, although kneeling, is seven feet in height, and who, with a club in his right hand, a snake wound around his left arm, and a ferocious countenance, should frighten any child into spasms rather than invite familiarity.

Herr Perk pointed out to us, on the common between the two great temples, a formless green mound which he would excavate the following week, and showed us also the Chandi Lompang, a temple cleared off eighty years ago, but covered with a tangle of underbrush and a few tall trees—a sufficient illustration of what all the Loro Jonggran temples had been when the Djokja Society began its work of rescue and preservation. The British engineers could see in 1812 that Chandi Lompang had been a central shrine surrounded by fourteen smaller temples, whose carved stones have long been scattered to fence fields and furnish foundation-stones for the neighborhood. It was hoped that the kind mantle of vegetation had preserved a series of bas-reliefs of Krishna and the lovely gopis, wrought with an art equal to that employed by the sculptors of the "Three Graces" at Loro Jonggran which the British surveyors uncovered. Every one must rejoice that a period of enlightenment has at last come to the colony, and that steps are being taken to care for the antiquities of the island.



FRAGMENT FROM LORO JONGGRAN TEMPLE.

There are other regions of extensive temple ruins in Java, but none where the remains of the earlier civilization are so well preserved, the buildings of such extent and magnificence, their cults and their records so well known, as at Boro Boedor and Brambanam. The extensive ruins of the Singa Sari temples, four miles from Malang, near the southeastern end of the island, are scattered all through a teak and waringen forest, half sunk and overgrown with centuries of vegetation. Images of Ganesha, and a colossal Nandi, or sacred bull of Siva, with other Brahmanic deities, remain in sight; and inscriptions found there prove that the Singa Sari temples were built at about the same time as the Loro Jonggran temples at Brambanam. The mutilation and signs of wanton destruction of the recha suggest that it was not a peaceful conversion from Brahmanism to Mohammedanism in that kingdom either.

ON the Dieng plateau, southwest of Samarang, and not far from Boro Boedor, there are ruins of more than four hundred temples, and the traces of a city greater than any now existing on the island. This region has received comparatively little attention from archæologists, although it has yielded rich treasures in gold, silver, and bronze objects, a tithe of which are preserved in the museum of the Batavian Society. For years the Dieng villagers paid their taxes in rough ingots of gold melted from statuettes and ornaments found on the old temple sites, and more than three thousand florins a year were sometimes paid in such bullion. The Goenoeng Praoe, a mountain whose

summit-lines resemble an inverted praoe, or boat, is the fabled home of the gods; and the whole sacred height was once built over with temples, staircases of a thousand steps, great terraces, and embankment walls, now nearly lost in vegetation, and wrecked by the earthquakes of that very active volcanic region. These Dieng temples appear to have been solid structures, whose general form and ornamentation so resemble the ruins in Yucatan and the other states of Central America that archæologists still revolvè the puzzle of them, and hazard no conjectures as to the worshipers and their form of worship, save that the rites or sacrifices were very evidently conducted on the open summits or temple-tops. I could not obtain views of these ruined pyramid temples from any of the Batavia photographers, to satisfy me as to their exact lines even in decay. There are other old Siva temples in that region furtively worshiped still, and the "Valley of Death," where the fabled upas grew, was long believed to exist in that region, where the cult of the destroyer was observed.

M. de Charnay did not visit these pyramid temples of the Dieng plateau; but after seeing the temple of Boro Boedor, and those at Brambanam, he summed up the resemblances of the Buddhist and Brahmanic temples of Java to those at Palenque and in Yucatan as consisting: in the same order of gross idols; the pyramid form of temple, with staircases, like those of Palenque and Yucatan; the small chapels or oratories, with subterranean vaults beneath the idols; the same interior construction of temples; the stepped arches; the details of ornamentation, terraces, and esplanades,



GANESHA, THE ELEPHANT-HEADED GOD.

as in Mexico and Yucatan ; and the localization of temples in religious centers far from cities, forming places of pilgrimage, as at Palenque, Chichen-Itza, and, in a later time, at Cozumel.¹

¹ Vide "Six Semaines à Java," par Désiré de Charnay ("Le Tour du Monde," volume for 1880)