

THE
ANTIQUITIES OF CAMBODIA

A SERIES OF
PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN ON THE SPOT

With Letterpress Description

By JOHN THOMSON, F.R.G.S., F.E.S.L.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

CAMBODIA is one of the most fertile and beautiful of the tropical countries of S.-E. Asia. It is bounded on the N., N.-W., and W. by Anam, Laos, and Siam; on the S. by the Gulf of Siam; and E. by Lower Cochin China. Like Egypt, Cambodia possesses a great fertilizing agency in the annual inundation of the Mekong River, which flows through the country from an unknown source in the south of China.

At present the cultivation of rice, cotton, silk, pepper, tobacco, and other products is confined to a small radius round the towns and villages scattered along the banks of the river, or of the Tale-Sap (a great fresh-water lake). When the country was in its glory the interior must have been a perfect garden. It is now covered with vast prairies and impenetrable forests. Scattered in handfuls round the outskirts of these forests, where the elephant, the rhinoceros, and the tiger abound, the rude natives, who live in the most primitive fashion, gain their subsistence by collecting gums, cardimums, ivory, horns, and hides.

Native tradition, the annals of the surrounding nations, the ancient stone cities, the bridges that span the rivers, and the highways that intersect the plains, tell us that the ancient Cambodians were a powerful and cultivated race, whose influence extended far and wide, and who spared no labour or wealth in developing the resources of their vast dominions. For at least 500 years Cambodia has been on the decline, and its territory has undergone a process of gradual absorption by the surrounding nations. Only eighty-four years ago the provinces in which its finest antiquities are found were ceded to the Siamese (see King of Siam's letter), and the entire country was tributary to Siam up to August 1863, when, by a French treaty with the Siamese, Cambodia was rendered an independent kingdom.

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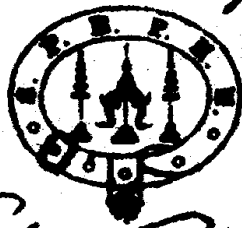
LETTERPRESS DESCRIPTION.

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No 129.



Royal residence
Grand palace

Bangkok

13th May

1866

To Mr Thomson
the photographer
gentleman

I beg to take from
you a promise
that you should
state every where
verbally or in books
& newspapers public
papers that those
provinces of Battambang
& Angkor in Siam
belonged to
Siam continuously
for 84 years ago
not interrupted by
Cambodian princes
or Cochinchina the
fortification of those
places were constru-
cted by Siamese govern-
ment 33 years
ago. The Cambodian
rulers can not claim
on those provinces
as they have sided to
Siamese authority
84 years ago.

I beg to take from you a promise that you should state every where verbally or in books & newspapers public papers that those provinces of Battambang & Angkor in Siam belonged to Siam continuously for 84 years ago not interrupted by Cambodian princes or Cochinchina the fortification of those places were constructed by Siamese government 33 years ago. The Cambodian rulers can not claim on those provinces as they have sided to Siamese authority 84 years ago.

copied by Photo-lithography.

Extract from a letter written by H.M. the

KING of SIAM

THE ANTIQUITIES OF CAMBODIA.

I.—JOURNEY ACROSS SIAM TO CAMBODIA.

DURING the beginning of the year 1865, while resident in Singapore, I resolved to visit Siam, with the object of making myself better acquainted with the country, its people, and its products, in consequence of the interest excited in me by reading the late M. Mouhot's "Travels in Indo-China, Cambodia, and Laos," and other works to which I had access. The description given in M. Mouhot's work of the magnificence of the ruined cities which the author found in the heart of the Cambodian forests induced me not only to carry out my resolution of visiting Siam, but to cross the country, and penetrate to the interior of Cambodia, for the purpose of exploring and photographing its ruins.

I had been in Bangkok, the capital of Siam, about five months, when Mr Kennedy, of H.B.M. Consulate, volunteered to join me in the expedition to Cambodia. We left Bangkok on 27th January 1866. Besides the photographic apparatus and chemicals necessary for the wet collodion process, I carried with me a set of astronomical instruments, which proved useful during the journey, and subsequently, in obtaining the bearings and measurements of the great buildings in Moug Siam-rap-buree. A brief outline of our route may be given in a few sentences. Entering the Klong Kook Mie Creek at Bangkok, we passed eastward through a sparsely populated country, a distance of about 40 miles, to the Baupakong River. Rivers, creeks, and canals form a perfect network of communication over the vast plain that lies south of Korat and the Nakoniyok range of mountains; all communicating with the main stream, the great Menam River, which parts the country of Siam into nearly equal halves. The Klong Kook Mie may be considered the great artery through which the produce of the eastern provinces flows into the capital. At Kabin we left our boats to begin a weary overland journey, lasting nearly a month, and completely exhausting our stock of provisions and our strength. About ten days before we reached our destination, I had an attack of jungle fever,

which left me so weak that I was for some time unable to walk. Had it not been for the care and attention of Mr Kennedy, I felt that in all probability I must have met the fate of M. Mouhot, and perished in the jungle. Our mode of travelling varied according to circumstances. We were disappointed at Moug Prachim in not obtaining elephants to carry us over the entire route, and had to content ourselves with the means of conveyance offered at the different settlements on our way—ponies harnessed in the rudest fashion, buffalo waggons that were continually breaking down, and being repaired with the materials which the forest or jungle might supply, causing us to halt for hours, not unfrequently at midday, in a stunted forest, or on a shelterless prairie, with the vertical rays of a tropical sun beating down upon our heads. After crossing the head of the great fresh-water lake of Cambodia (Tale Sap), our passport from the Siamese Government procured us elephants, on which we travelled north from the lake, a distance of about 15 miles, to Siam-rap-buree, the chief town of the province of Siam-rap, within whose boundaries the principal antiquities of Cambodia are situated. It had occupied us exactly a month to reach the Cambodian frontier; with a line of rail across the country, the transit could be accomplished in a day, as the distance is about equal to travelling from the English to the Scotch capital. The journey, however, with all its hardships, was not devoid of interest, as we had passed through some of the most exquisite river and forest scenery of the tropics, offering boundless attraction in common to the artist, the naturalist, and the sportsman.

As the advancing dry season was rapidly exhausting the pools upon which the traveller in Siam and Cambodia depends for his supplies of water, it would have been fatal for us to have attempted returning by the same route. We therefore, after exploring the ruins, and penetrating to the Lychie Mountains (whence the stone used by the ancient Cambodians must have been obtained), descended the Tale Sap to Pnomb Pinh, the capital of Cambodia, situated at the confluence of the outlet of the lake with the Mekong or great river of Cambodia. While in Cambodia, we experienced the utmost kindness from the King and from the French officers* stationed at Pnomb Pinh and "Oudong." When his Majesty heard that we had determined to return by the Gulf to Bangkok, he ordered that a suitable escort should conduct us on elephants to Kampot, and that the Government should furnish a boat for our return voyage up the Gulf of Siam. We fortunately had a fair wind from Kampot, and made the run to Bangkok, a distance of about 500 miles, in five days.

* Cambodia was formerly a dependency of Siam, but a few years ago the French, who are in possession of Cochin China, interfered, and, by a treaty with the King of Siam, rendered Cambodia an independent country, under the joint protection of France and Siam. The province, however, of Cambodia in which the principal antiquities are found, is still connected with Siam.

II.—GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE ANTIQUITIES OF CAMBODIA.

THE antiquities of Cambodia, which are now found shrouded in the heart of the dense tropical forests of the country, consist of walled cities of vast extent; exquisitely built stone bridges, spanning with a multitude of arches the streams of the interior; temples more curious and extensive than those of Central America, and approaching in their classical appearance the works of the ancient Greeks or Romans; palaces of the ancient kings, adorned, like the monasteries, with the richest sculpture; artificial lakes surrounded by walls of solid masonry; and the remains of elevated highways, by which the marshy districts of the country were traversed.

The foundations of the buildings and the retaining walls of the artificial lakes and ditches consist of iron conglomerate, and the buildings themselves chiefly of polished blocks of freestone, fitted together without mortar and with such accuracy as in the finer examples almost to defy a trace of joining.

These antiquities are said to extend into the Laos country; the chief cities and buildings are, however, found on the plain north of Tale Sap, and are scattered over an area of some 50 miles in diameter, extending as far north as the Lychie Mountains, where we found a small temple built of freestone, and having the classical-looking square pillars common to Nakhon Wat and to one or two of the best preserved buildings in the ancient city Ongou Thom, or Nakhon Thom (Capital City). The greatest of all the Cambodian antiquities, and the one which this volume specially illustrates, is situated about 15 miles north of Tale Sap, and occupies a square area (measuring about three-quarters of a mile each way) surrounded by a broad ditch. Within this area are the remains existing, in wonderful preservation, of the great temple of

NAKHON WAT (*The Temple of the Capital*).

Regarding its origin, or the history of the people who built it, the rude races of the present day can tell us nothing. They believe it to have been the work of the gods, and their wild and fanciful traditions, which they narrate with child-like credulity, attribute its origin to a flight of Tewadah (angels), or the wish of a god, or a race of giants. Such are the materials that, like the

luxuriant tropical forests that shroud the buildings themselves, centuries of ignorance and neglect have thrown around the history of a great forgotten race. Apart from the native traditions, the principal buildings contain a series of inscriptions, which will doubtless supply their true history. The characters of the more modern writings resemble the Pali or present Cambodian. The ancient inscriptions are, however, graven in a dead language, resembling, to some extent, the ancient Javanese or Kawi in its characters. What we collected of them were examined by the chief Buddhist priest of Cambodia, who constructed an alphabet of the characters. They were afterwards submitted by the Rev. Mr Smith, of the American Mission at Bangkok, to the leading Sanscrit and Pali scholars among the Buddhist priests of Siam, and translations were obtained; unfortunately, however, not two of the translations proved alike. Dr A. Bastian of Bremen, who was the next to visit the ruins after Mouhot, and who is now preparing an elaborate work on the nations of Eastern Asia, may, in his volume on Cambodia, throw some light on the history of its antiquities. More might be hoped from the King of Siam, who is a distinguished Sanscrit and Pali scholar, and who is perfectly familiar with all that is authentic in the history of his own and the surrounding nations, were he to undertake the investigation of the matter. He would, doubtless, be able to elucidate the history of the period that produced the great cities of Cambodia, of which one of our greatest English authorities says, "Since the exhumation of the buried cities of Assyria by Mons. Botta and Mr Layard, nothing has occurred so startling, or which has thrown so much light on eastern art, as the discovery of the ruined cities of Cambodia."*

The Buddhist priests of both Cambodia and Siam agree in pointing to Lanka (Ceylon) as the common source of their religion. Pallegoix asserts that Nakhon Wat was erected by "Phra Pathum Surivong," an ancient king of Cambodia, when the Buddhist books were brought from Ceylon, and the Cambodians became Buddhists. In the information collected by Dr Bastian, he gives the year 957 for the founding of Inthaparapuri (commonly called Nakhon Thom by the Cambodians), by King Pathummasurivong (Phra Pathum Surivong). This city is situate some 3 miles south of Nakhon Wat. "Jumping from this initial date, we have a final one in the conquest of the country by the Siamese (1351-1374), after which time the old capital was deserted, and no more temples were erected there. Our architectural history is therefore confined to the four centuries which elapsed between 951 and 1357."†

It seems evident that the temple Nakhon Wat was erected for snake worship, as a seven-headed snake is a constantly

* Ferguson's History of Architecture. Vol. II., p. 71, et seq.

† Ferguson. Vol. II., p. 715.

recurring ornament throughout the entire building, and what appears to be Buddha is invariably represented as an inferior deity in the attitude of a worshipper. It seems doubtful, therefore, whether this was the temple erected for the reception of the "Patriarch Buddhaghosa, who is said to have brought the holy Trai-Pidok from Lanka (Ceylon),"* unless the imported Buddhism was mixed up to a great extent with the idolatry of the Yekkos and Nagas, the ancient snake worshippers of Ceylon, or the race who built the snake temples of Cashmere. There is evidence of this building having been converted into a Buddhist temple, and used as such at a subsequent period. The square compartment, for instance, or sanctuary beneath the centre tower, has four gateways conducting into four outer apartments. These gateways have been rudely blocked up with rubble work, which has been plastered over, while on each of the four surfaces an image of Buddha, in alto-relievo, has been moulded. These images are rudely fashioned, and cannot bear comparison with the other parts of the temple, and, besides, this is the only part of the building where plaster or mortar has been used. Had these images been intended as the special objects of worship when the temple was erected, they would have been sculptured in stone, and not plastered upon a wall where a wall was never intended to exist. It would therefore appear that these are the additions of a later race than the original builders of Nakhon Wat. We endeavoured to penetrate to this central apartment, but could find no means of access, unless we had opened a passage through one of the built-up doorways. Had this been attempted, we would probably have met the same fate as that of a Siamese mandarin, who was killed by the natives some years ago while removing images from the ruins.

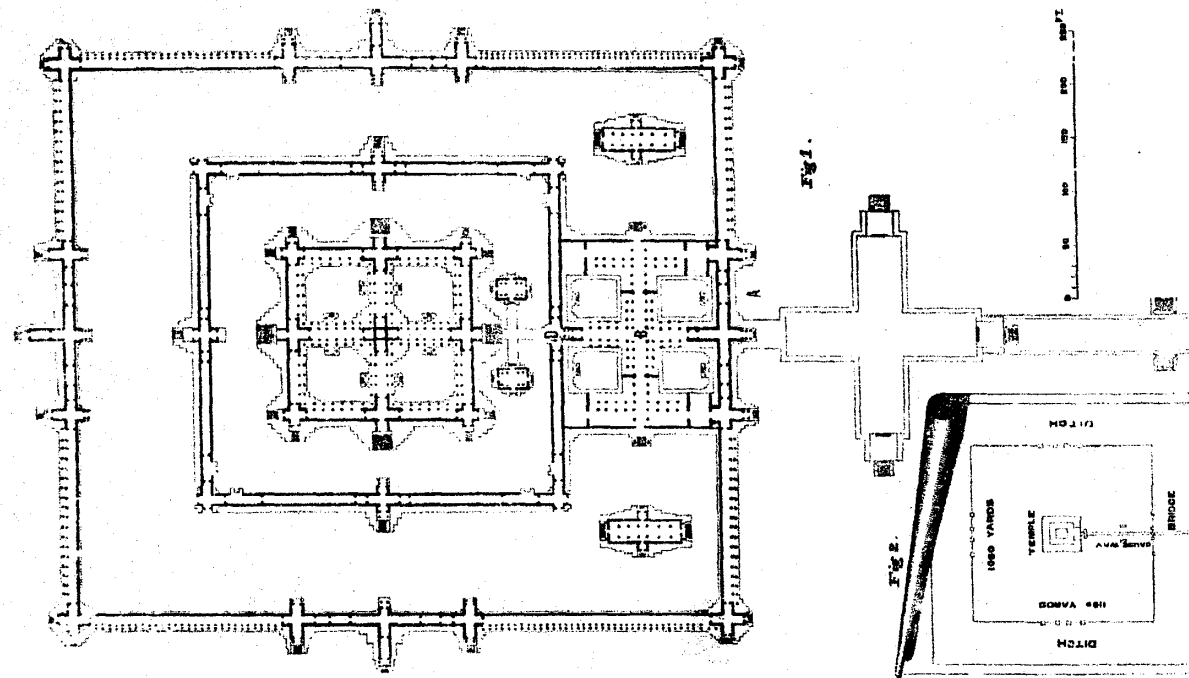
Some trace of a Chinese element may be discovered by a careful comparison of the ground plan of the temple of Hoonan, given in Stewart's "Architecture,"† with that of Nakhon Wat. Taking that part of the plan shewn at D, many features in common will be found to exist in the general design of the two buildings. Or take the description given by Marco Polo of Kublais Palace at Kambala (supposed to have been Peking)‡—"It is a complete square, a mile long on every side. At each angle is a very fine edifice. In the middle of the walls between these four edifices are others, making altogether eight. Towards the south are five gates." This corresponds very closely, in dimensions and general description, with the outer wall and galleries of Nakhon Wat, with the five great gateways on the west side. "These walls enclose the palace of the mighty lord. The walls are adorned with pictures of dragons, horses, &c. Between the walls are planted meadows; on the other side, towards the south, is a magnificent lake." There are artificial lakes within the enclosure at Nakhon Wat.

* Bastian on Cambodia. Geographical Society, Feb. 1855.

† Stewart's Dictionary of Architecture.

‡ Marco Polo's Travels. Murray, page 117.

It is also stated in one of the Cambodian traditions, that a great king, named Kampalang, came from the north to inspect this part of his dominions, and that he was so much pleased with the site on which Nakhon Wat is built that he erected a great palace on it, which, during a subsequent reign, was transformed into a temple (Nakhon Wat). Assuming that this evidence points to an early and intimate alliance of the Cambodians with the warlike Mongolians, the mixed style of Cambodian architecture might be, in some measure, accounted for, when we take into account that it was customary for the forces of the great Khan, when they had added a city to their wide-spread conquests, to spare the artisans to act as slaves. By this means the government would have at all times a variety and abundance of skilled labour at its disposal.



Plan of Temple of Nakhon Wat. From a Survey by the Author. Scale 135 ft. to 1 in.

III.—GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF BASSI-RELIEVI.

THE bas-reliefs of Nakhon Wat, which are sculptured on the walls of the outer galleries, are as curious and interesting as the architecture itself. They are contained in eight compartments, measuring each from 250 to 300 feet in length, with a height of $6\frac{1}{2}$ feet. Their aggregate length is therefore over 2000 feet. In a square space of $6\frac{1}{2}$ feet, the average number of men and animals represented is sixty. The majority of these representations are executed with such skill and care, and are so well drawn, as to indicate that art was fostered, and must have reached a high state of perfection, among the Khamain-teburan (ancient Cambodians). The skill displayed in these bas-reliefs goes far to prove that Nakhon Wat was erected during the reign of a Cambodian Semiramis, when the wealth and resources of the country must have been equal, if not superior, to that of the ancient Egyptians, and when the Cambodians, one would conceive, must have been a nation of skilled workmen. In the bassi-relievi of Nakhon Wat, grace of form, elegance, and symmetry, may be fairly said to characterize their execution; and although inferior to the Greek, they are superior to the Egyptian examples, where the faces are nearly uniform, and the features made up of a set number of curves, the sculptor apparently having been bound down by a few stiff rules for the posing and arrangement of his figures and drapery.

The chief representations in the Nakhon Wat galleries consist of battle scenes taken from the epic poem of Ramayana or Mahabharata (which the Siamese are said to have received from India about the 4th or 5th century). Disciplined forces are depicted marching to the field, possessing distinct characteristics, that are soon lost in the confusion of battle. In the eager faces and attitudes of the warriors as they press forward past bands of musicians, we see that music then, as now, had its spirit-stirring influence. We also find humane actions represented—a group bending over a wounded comrade, to extract an arrow or remove him from the field. There, also, are the most animated representations of deeds of daring and bravery—soldiers saving the lives of their chiefs; chiefs bending over their plunging steeds, and measuring their prowess in single combat; and, finally, the victorious army quitting the field laden with spoil, and guarding the numerous captives with cavalry in advance and rear. Perhaps the most wonderful subject of all the bas-reliefs is what the Siamese call the battle of "Ramakean." This subject is

one of the leading events described in the Ramayana, of which poem Coleman says—"The Grecians had their Homer, to render imperishable the fame acquired by their glorious combats in the Trojan war; the Latins had Virgil, to sing the prowess of Æneas; and the Hindoos have their Valmac, to immortalize the martial deeds of Rama and his army of monkeys. The Ramayana, one of the finest epic poems (in spite of its extravagances) extant, describes the incidents of Rama's life, and exploits of the contending foes." In the sculptures of Nakhon Wat, many of the incidents in the life of Rama are depicted—such as his ultimate triumph over the god Ravana, and the recovery of his wife Sita, who is reported to have been of transcendent beauty. The chief illustration of the poem, however, is the battle scene which ensues after the ape-god Hanuman had performed several of the feats which formed the every-day incidents of his life, such as the construction of what is now known as Adam's Bridge, at Ceylon. This he accomplished by a judicious selection of ten mountains, each measuring 64 miles in circumference; and being short of arms, but never of expedients, when conveying them to Ceylon he poised one on the tip of his tail, another on his head, and with these he formed the bridge over which his army of monkeys passed to the field of battle at Lanka. In the battle scene, Rama is represented on the shoulders of Hanuman: he wears a crown, and holds in his left hand a bow, in his right an arrow, and has a quiver of arrows at his back.* Another figure, which appears to be intended for Lakshman, the brother of Rama, is supported by Garuda. Jumont, Ungud, and the other ape generals, are engaged in the overthrow of the Raksashas† of Ravana's army. The monkey warriors are represented with great muscular limbs, and are fighting with sword and club, hurling huge stones at the enemy, wrenching their heads off, and in some cases are literally devouring the followers of Ravana.

In another compartment the subject appears to be the second avatar of Vishnu, where Vishnu is represented as a tortoise supporting the earth, which is submerged in the waters. The four-armed Brahma is seated above. A seven-headed serpent is shewn above the water. It is coiled in the centre round the earth, and extends the entire length of the bas-relief. The gods on the right, and the diutyas on the left, are seen contending for the possession of the serpent; Hanuman is shewn pulling by the tail; while a flight of angels are floating above, bearing what appears to be a cable, to bind the snake after the contest is over.‡

* This corresponds exactly with Ward's account of how Rama is generally represented.

† Demons in the form of lions, tigers, &c., yoked in pairs in the chariots of the chiefs.

‡ It is supposed that this avatar is an allegory relating to the general deluge.

NAKHON THOM, OR INTHAPATAPURI.

THE ruins of the city Nakhon Thom, which, as its name implies, was the capital of Cambodia, are situate about three miles north of Nakhon Wat, and are approached by a narrow path cut through the dense underwood of the forest. The central gateway in the south wall of the city is reached by a bridge raised across a broad moat or ditch. A sudden descent conducts to the basement of the gateway, some 5 or 6 feet lower than the present level of the plain. This apparent depression may have been caused by the *debris* that has for centuries gathered round the walls during the annual floods, and by the decay and deposit of the vegetable matter of the forest. The city wall has been partly imbedded by the same process, so that it was impossible to ascertain its true height. The wall is composed of huge blocks of iron conglomerate, and encloses a nearly square space, measuring about 5 miles each way. The gateway through which we passed is chiefly built of freestone, and presents something the appearance of a Gothic arch at the top, having an elevation at its apex of from 30 to 40 feet. Over the gateway rises a colossal tower, sculptured into what the natives call the four-faced Phrohm or Brahma. Passing about 2 miles north into the enclosure, we came upon a native settlement, consisting of five or six bamboo huts raised on a paltry clearing in the forest. The natives live upon rice, which they plant in small quantities. They have a strong belief that there is an untold amount of treasure concealed somewhere about the city. We saw many places where they had been burrowing in search of it. It is difficult to believe that these are a remnant of the ancient Cambodians—to conceive of a race more simple and primitive in their manners, we would have to go back to an early period, before building was invented. Their modest huts of bamboo and palm leaves, when compared with the magnificent temples and palaces that surround them, present as great a contrast as the habits of the ancient Cambodians must have done to those of these simple foresters who dwell in their huts, trusting to the bounty of nature to supply their wants—while indolence, or superstition, or both, prevent them stretching forth a hand to protect from the ravages of time those monuments whose existence at no distant period will be marked by heaps of ruins, that, like blots, will only disfigure what might have been a splendid page in the history of the human race.

Close to this clearing we find huge images of Buddha, apparently built of brick and plastered over, and therefore of comparatively modern date, raised on the causeway of a great temple. The temple is called, by Mouhot, Prea Sat Ling Poun (the pagoda where they play hide-and-peek), part of which forms the subject of one of the illustrations. A little to the north-east of this there is the palace called Phrasat Chowkerhuan (palace of the leprous king). Beneath a rude shed we find what the natives believe to be a statue of this potentate. He is seated in a dignified attitude; the features, in their regularity, resemble the Hindoo, and are remarkable for their calm dignity of expression; the statue is life size, and sculptured out of a single stone. It is now set up as an object of worship for the natives. In the vicinity of the palace are a number of large water tanks, retained within walls of iron conglomerate. Among the *debris* about this part of the city are to be found large quantities of pottery. Although broken up into fragments, they offer some trace of the elegant forms of the vessels used by the ancients. In their ornaments and glazing they bear some resemblance to the pottery of China. For a description of the other buildings of this and the city of Paten-Taphrom, &c., I refer the reader to the work of the late M. Mouhot.

Although a tradition, which was narrated to us by a noble of Siamrap, asserts that Nakhon Thom was built at a much earlier date, some of our best authorities consider it (founding their theory on the historical records of Siam and the adjacent countries, and on the style of architecture) to have been founded by Phra Patham Surivong about the middle of the 10th century.

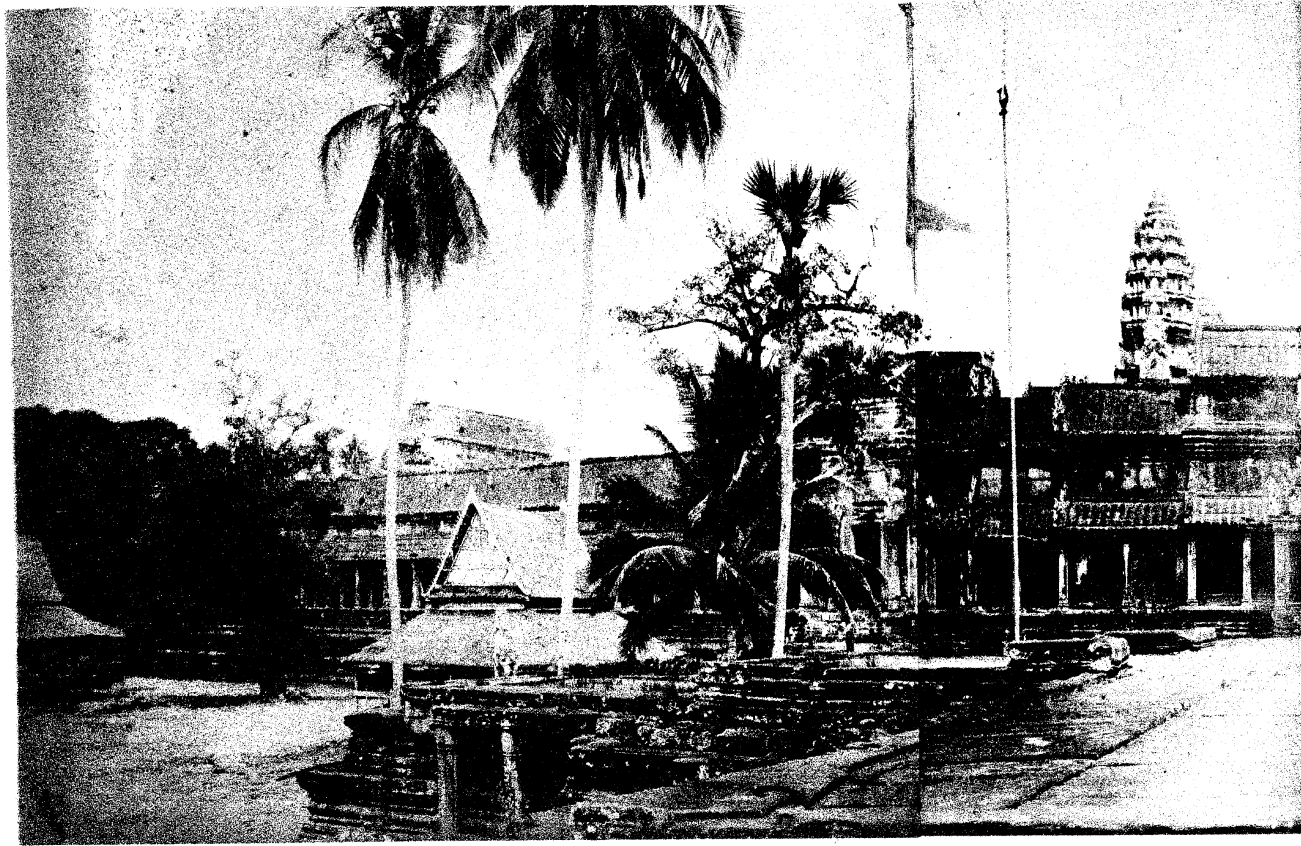


I. TO III.—WESTERN FRONT OF NAKHON WAT.

NAKHON WAT, or Temple of the Capital, the greatest of the Cambodian antiquities, is situated in the province of Siamrap, about 5 miles north of the town Siamrapburee. Like the majority of the buildings in Inthapatapuri and the other ruined cities of Cambodia, it is raised upon a stone socle. It rises from its base in three quadrangular tiers, the apex of the great central tower having an elevation of 180 feet. The outer boundary wall encloses nearly a square space measuring about three-fourths of a mile each way, and is surrounded by a ditch 230 feet broad. This is crossed on the west by a raised stone causeway, having pillars on either side, and exquisitely sculptured flights of steps communicating with the water. Facing the cardinal points of the compass, and in the centre of each side of the boundary wall, there are long galleries with arched roofs and monolithic pillars, presenting a striking and classical appearance. Entering the main gateway through the western boundary, and passing up a broad inner causeway, paved, like the outer one, with blocks of polished freestone, we approach the western front of the temple shown in the photograph. Ascending to a cruciform terrace by a flight of steps, sculptured with the most beautiful ornaments, and guarded on either side by colossal stone lions, we stand before the principal entrance of the temple. This front is over 600 feet long. About a third of its entire length is walled-in in the centre, and divided into compartments lighted with windows, each window having seven ornamental stone bars. The floral patterns on these bars are as carefully repeated as if they had been cast from a single mould, or turned by machinery. These apartments occur in the centre of all the galleries, and may have been intended for the shelter and accommodation of the priests. The remaining two-thirds of the gallery, as may be seen from the photograph, consist of open colonnades, the back walls of which are adorned with the exquisite bas-relief representations that form one of the chief attractions of Nakhon Wat.

The hut on the left represents the dwelling of one of the modern priests attached to the temple. They were placed there after the rediscovery of the temple in 1570. The nomination of the abbots for the temple is now in the hands of the governor of Siamrapburee.*

* Dr Bastian. Geographical Society, 13th February 1865.



IV.—GATEWAY IN CENTRE OF WESTERN GALLERY.

THIS photograph gives a closer view of the gateway seen in the preceding picture. It may be taken as an example of the proportion and general appearance of all the entrances to the temple—the projecting columns supporting a richly ornamented architrave and corbeled roof; the pilasters on either side of the entrance adorned with chaste and elaborate ornament; a doorway of the most classic proportion, and finished with graceful mouldings.

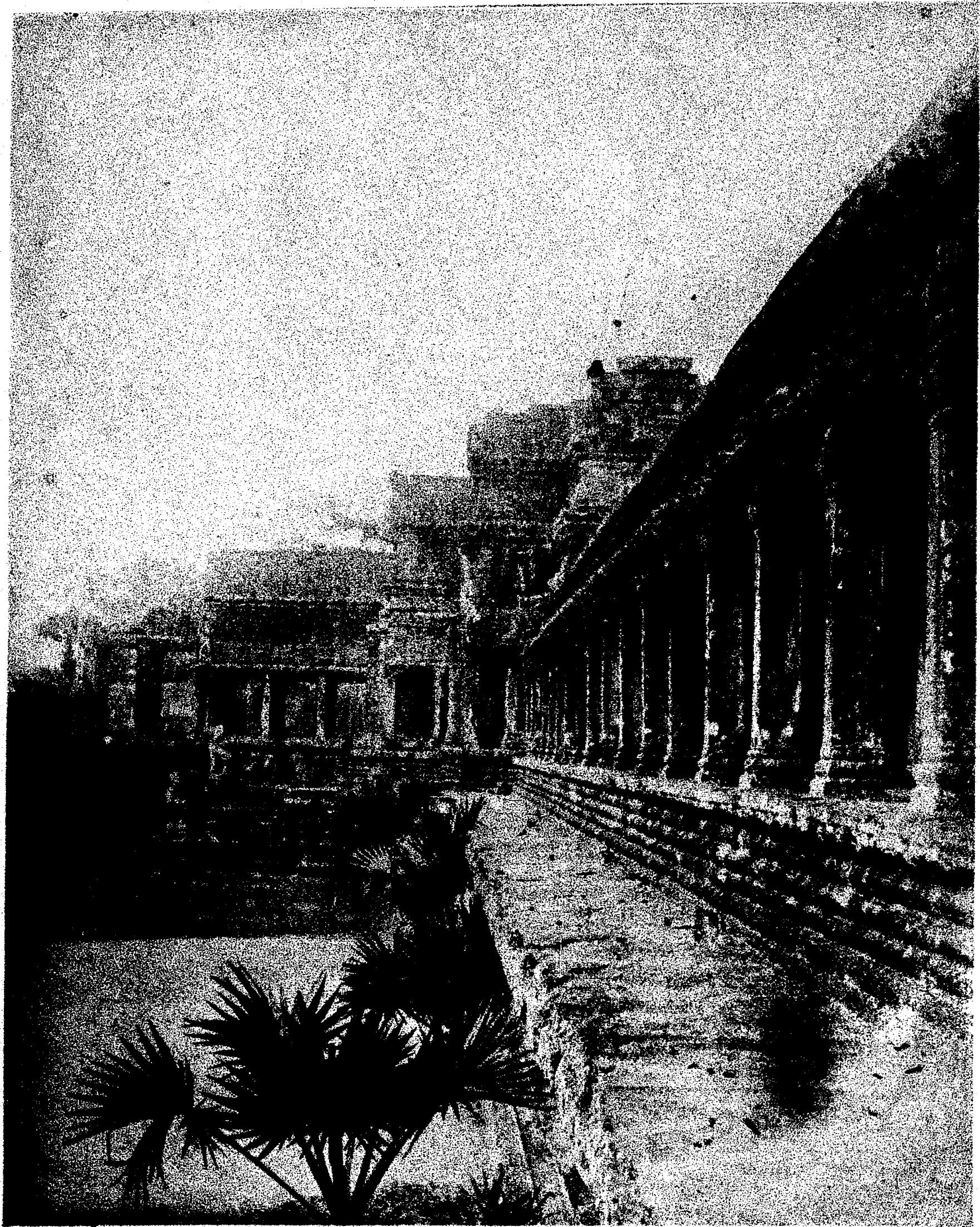
In examining this picture, one cannot fail to be struck with the taste displayed in construction, and the classical appearance of the whole. Regarding the pillars, Fergusson says—"The proportion of diameter to height; the entasis; the proportion between the upper and lower diameter; the capital and its abacus; the base with its plinth; the architrave, &c., are so like the Roman order, that it is difficult to conceive of the likeness being accidental. How the pillars came there we do not know; but we must not overlook the fact, that in the traditions collected by Dr Bastian, and more especially in those extracted from Siamese books by Col. Low, nothing is so commonly asserted and insisted upon as the presence of a prince of Rome, of Romans, and of white men."*

* Fergusson's Architecture. Bk. vi., ch. ii.



V.—PART OF WESTERN GALLERY.

THIS view shews a portion of the western gallery as it rises from the richly sculptured socle or platform. The great western entrance occupies the centre of the picture, and is shewn in profile. Two of the stone lions, common to many of the entrances of the temple, may be seen facing one of the minor gateways of this gallery. The outer galleries are removed back from the extreme edge of the socle, leaving the margin (seen on the right of the photograph) nearly broad enough for a carriage drive, and paved with huge blocks of freestone. Rising above this, to the base of the outer pillars, are a series of beads richly ornamented with roses and arabesques. The ornament above the double bead of the architrave consists of countless representations of a seven-headed snake. This ornament is again repeated above, along the ridge of the roof; the heads of this snake adorn every angle of the roofs; and the remains of a snake balustrade are to be seen along the entire length of the main causeway, with its upreared heads guarding every approach. In the form of a balustrade, it also appears to have encompassed the building. This snake god meets one at the very threshold of the temple, and is continued throughout to its apex, as the leading ornament of Nakhon Wat.

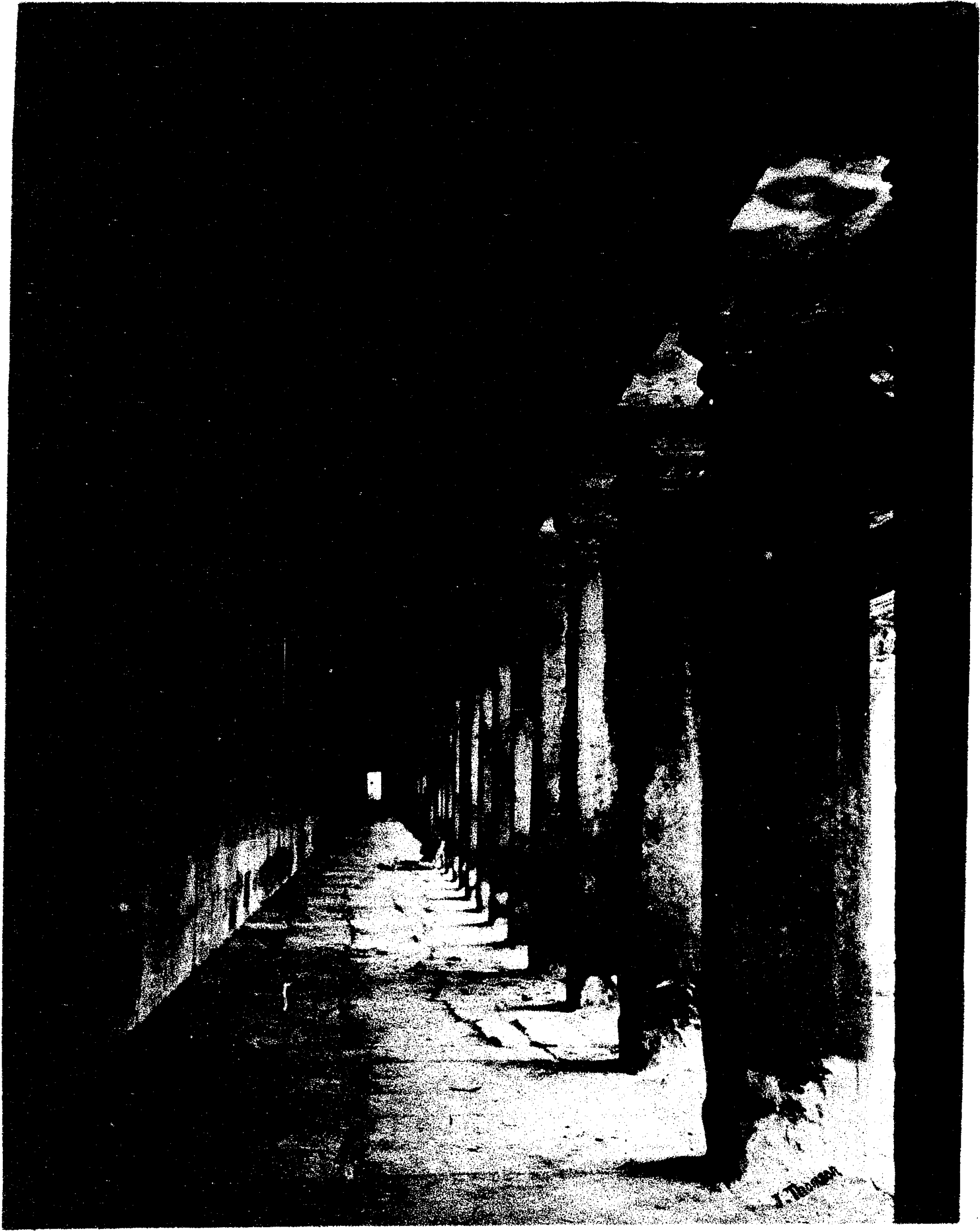


VI.—INTERIOR OF WESTERN GALLERY.

FROM this photograph, taken in connection with the exterior represented in the preceding one, a general idea may be formed of the construction of the lowest galleries of Nakhon Wat. The mechanical arrangements of the galleries or colonnades are as perfect as their design is artistic. On the left side is a solid wall of the most exquisite masonry, where the stones are fitted together without mortar or cement of any kind, and this is a characteristic of the entire building. I believe, from what I was enabled to observe by the displacement of some of the blocks of stone, that they must have been held together by metallic fixings, which are perfectly concealed in the finished structure. All trace of metal has, however, been carefully removed; and I am convinced that the temple itself would have been reduced by its plundering enemies to a heap of ruins were it not that its magnitude and rock-like stability presented too formidable an obstacle to the destroyers, who probably were as ignorant as we of the nineteenth century are of the mechanical appliances by which the ancients were enabled to transport the masses of stone from the distant quarries, and to raise them in the form of this stupendous monument.

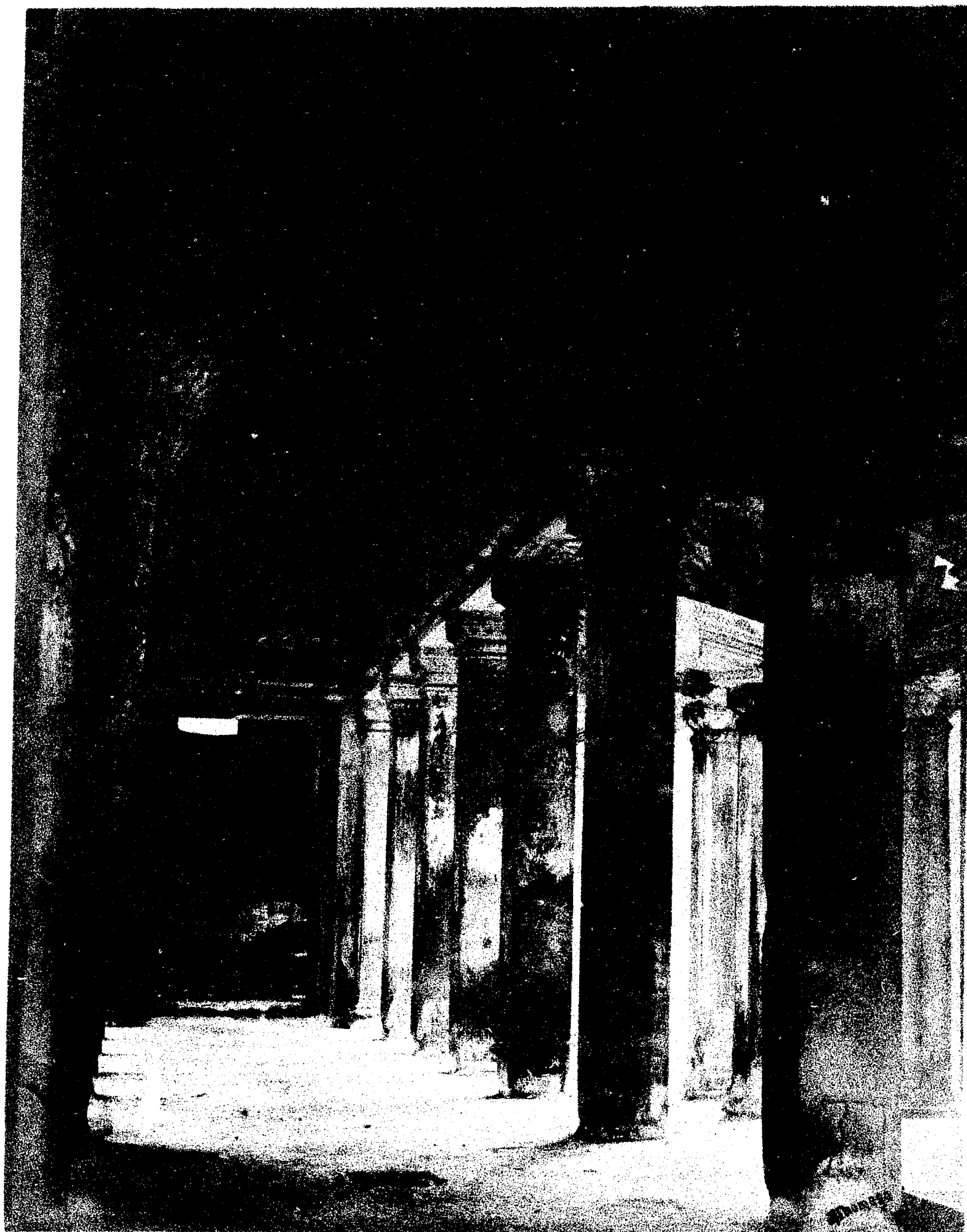
The row of pillars on the right are removed from the back wall a distance of 10 feet 6 inches. The pillars have no bases, but are adorned with the figure of a devotee in the attitude of worship. Above this figure, and running along the edge of the shaft, is a delicately cut ornament; the pillars carry an architrave, and a deep frieze, and cornice. Above the cornice is a pointed arch formed by corbeling. This arch I believe to have been originally concealed by a richly-carved wooden ceiling, a fragment of which I discovered still in its place, in an obscure part of the temple. Outside this gallery is a second, supported by the short pillars shewn in the exterior view. This outer range supports what Fergusson terms a tie-beam. One end of this beam is inserted into the inner column just below the capital, so beautifully that M. Mouhot asserts the inner columns are monoliths. The joints will be detected by a careful examination of the photograph.

One of the most wonderful features of the buildings are the sculptured bas-reliefs. They are found in the eight compartments formed by the outer gallery, one on each side of the central group of entrances, each subject measuring from 250 to 300 feet in length, with a height of $6\frac{1}{2}$ feet. Their aggregate length is over 2000 feet, and the number of men, animals, and mythological figures represented, extends to from 16,000 to 20,000.



VII.—AN INNER GALLERY.

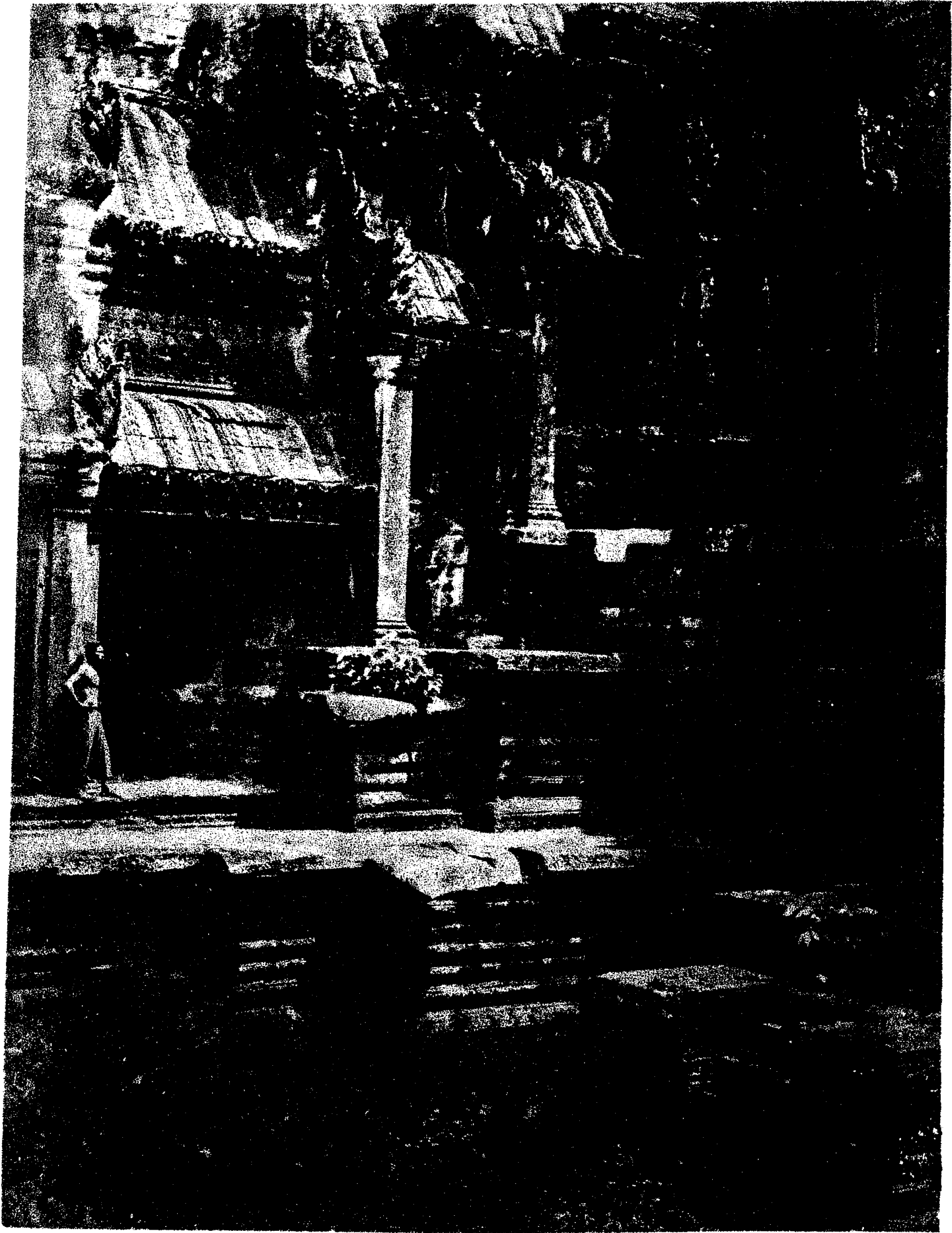
ASCENDING through the great western gateway towards the centre of the temple, we enter a cruciform gallery, conducting to four courts, or rather reservoirs, surrounded with open pillared galleries. This portion of the building is shewn at B in the ground plan, and is remarkable for its symmetry of construction. The view is taken from the point B, looking towards D. The pillars here, as in the inner range of the external corridors, have no base. Just below the capital, and extending about half-way down the shaft, we find a series of long inscriptions, which can be translated by the Cambodian priests, and are said to contain the records of offerings made by distinguished individuals who at different periods visited the temple. The pillars, as will be seen from the photograph, carry an architrave and a deep frieze, ornamented with female figures in graceful dancing attitudes, called by the natives Tewadah or Chao Savan (dwellers in heaven). Above the frieze is an exquisitely sculptured cornice, from which rises a pointed arch formed by corbeling. The general form of this portion of the building has a striking resemblance to the form of the Gothic structures of the twelfth century—when the pointed arch was introduced where there was a nave and side aisles and a transept on each side, forming the arms of a cross. In Nakhon Wat the rows of pillars take the place of the walls in the Gothic examples. Passing to the left, along an arm of the cross, we have before us one of the reservoirs, part of which is shewn in the next photograph.



VIII.—PART OF A RESERVOIR.

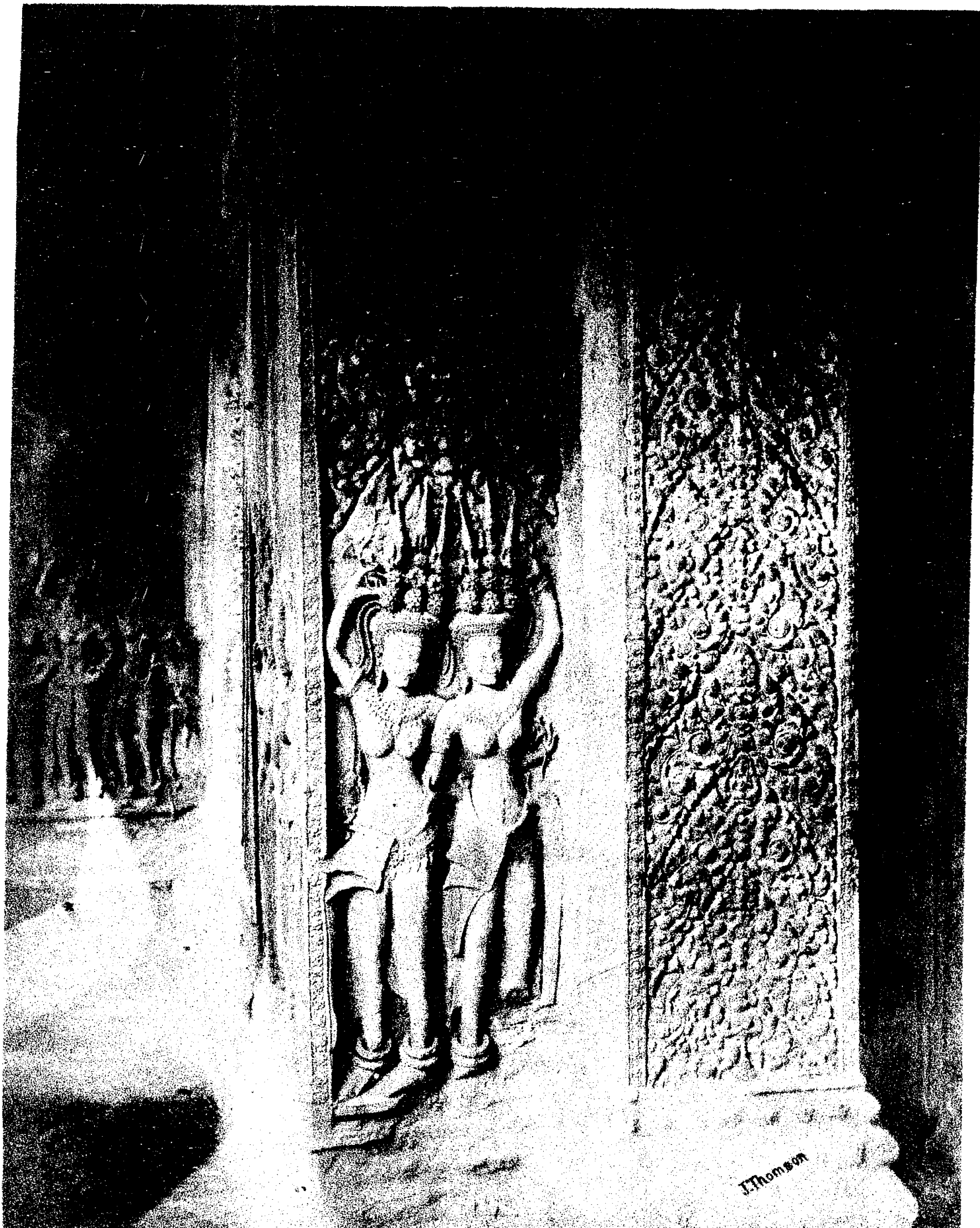
A FLIGHT of steps conducts to each reservoir. One of these descents is represented on the right of this photograph. These steps have been guarded on either side by stone lions, which we found in fragments in the reservoir. The positions which they occupied are indicated by the three holes shewn on the upper surface of the stone, on the right and left of the steps. In the centre of each of the four reservoirs we found a heap of sculptured stones. What these may have been it is difficult to say—probably images of the snake god, or even fountains with consecrated water issuing from the mouths of the seven-headed snake. In examining the upper reservoirs we discovered an aqueduct, which appears to have communicated with the lower reservoirs. If so, an enormous pressure of water would be obtained. That this idea may appear less hypothetical, I may state that at the present day it is customary in Siam, on the occasion of a great religious ceremony, such as the “hair cutting,” or coming of age of the Crown Prince (which I witnessed last year), to erect an artificial hill, having on its summit something like a rude imitation of the upper portion of Nakhon Wat. There was also an elevated reservoir of consecrated water, communicating with a tank at the foot of the hill, in the centre of which the Prince was seated, while he was bathed with the water as it issued in jets from the mouths of lions and other animals.

It will be seen, from a careful examination of the photograph, that the ornaments along the ridges, and at the angles of the roofs, consist of infinite repetitions of the seven-headed snake god. The picture, which is a mere fragment of the building, will also convey some idea of the beauty of design that characterises the whole, where the architect has combined the ornate richness of the finest Indian structures with the power and massiveness of our most classical examples, and in no part of the building can we find a finer illustration of the adaptation of the structure to the nature of the climate. The massive stone roofs, with their curved surfaces, present a reflecting angle to the hot rays of a vertical sun. Between the pillared spaces a mild reflected light would be admitted from the courts or the mirror-like surface of water in the reservoir; while the cool air of the inner corridors would induce an outward current, establishing a complete system of ventilation throughout the entire building. To sit at mid-day, beneath the inviting shade of these arching roofs, the solitude of the place and the scene before us carrying us back in imagination to the time when the temple was in its glory—when, perfect as they left the chisel of the sculptor, every pillar and ornament was mirrored in the reservoir, and when groups of devotees, in the graceful costume of a polished age, were waiting for the time of worship—seemed a recompense for all the toil of our journey, and inspired within us a feeling of reverence for the race that had raised such monuments to its religion and its god.



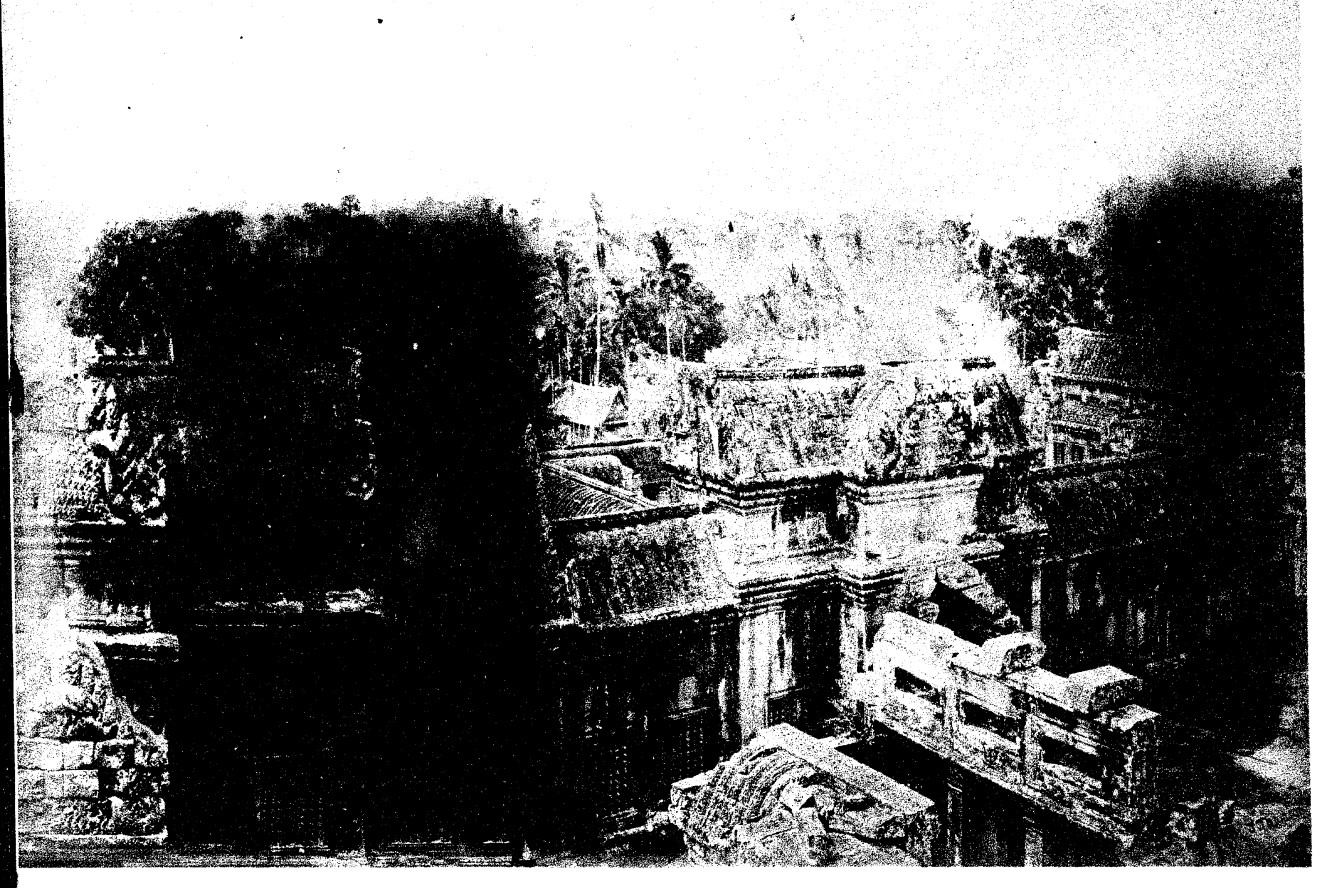
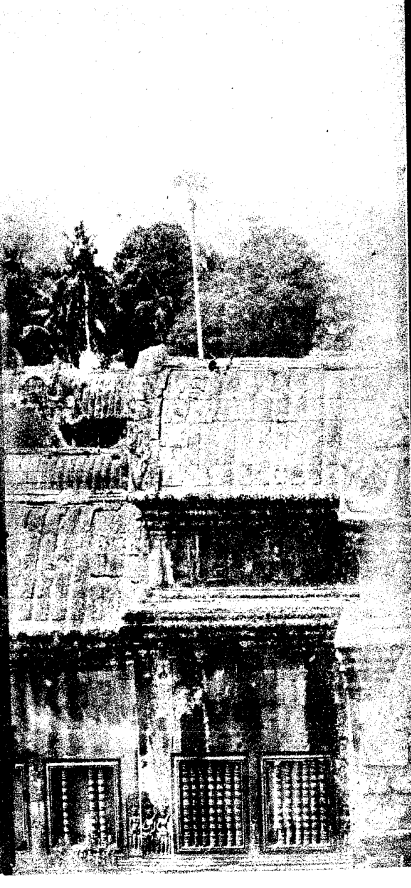
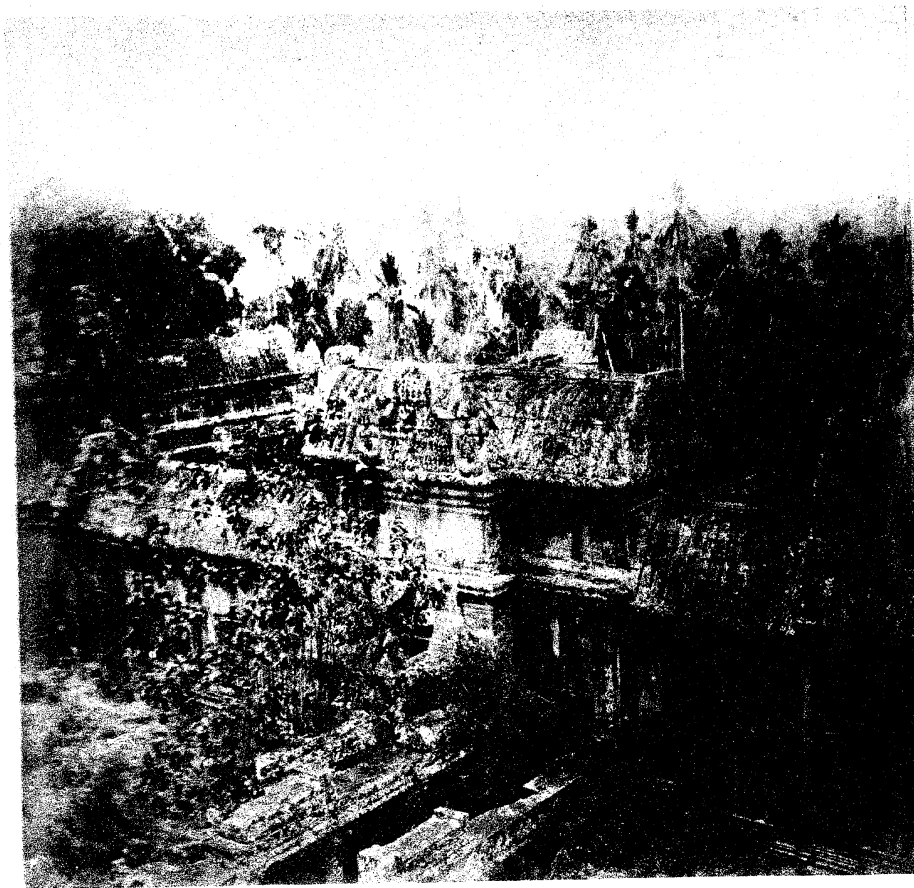
IX.—INTERIOR ORNAMENTS OF THE TEMPLE.

THIS subject represents the ornamented pilasters which adorn each side of the inner gateways of the temple. The female figures shewn occur in groups throughout the walls of the entire building. They are nearly life-size, and are known to the natives as the Chao Savan, who are supposed to form the retinue of the deified kings. They are found almost invariably wearing this three-pointed crown; and the same subjects are again found on a smaller scale, as Tewadah (angels), floating in mid-air above some of the bas-relief representations, and sculptured in dancing attitudes on the frieze of the inner galleries.



X. TO XII.—WESTWARD VIEW FROM THE CENTRAL TOWER.

THIS set of photographs is taken from the great central tower of Nakhon Wat, looking direct west, and represents the stone roofs of the upper galleries of the temple. In the centre of the whole, the main entrance through the western gallery in the outer enclosure is shewn, and a portion of the causeway leading up to the inner buildings of the temple. Some idea may be formed from the perspective of the picture, indicated in the minute dimensions of the distant tower, of the vast area that this building encloses, and of the years of toil which it represents, if we look upon it simply as an accumulation of huge unwieldy blocks of stone, that have been cut from the quarries, and conveyed, by some powerful mechanical agency, a distance of 40 miles across a burning plain.



XIII.—BAS-RELIEF OF BATTLE SCENE.

THE part of the bas-relief represented in this photograph occurs in the centre of a battle scene in the western gallery, where two armies are seen approaching from north and south, and closing in battle in the centre. The characteristics of the two forces, their chariots, their horses, their elephants, their costume, and their weapons, are so similar, that there is some difficulty in distinguishing between the combatants. There are differences, however, which one discovers on closer examination, but they are so slight as to indicate that the contending parties, if not of one nation, must have been closely allied in blood to each other. It is probably the record of some great international struggle that preceded the introduction of a new form of religion. Where the chiefs of the two parties appear, seated in the exquisitely constructed chariots, one of which occupies the centre of the photograph, what seem to be their titles are inscribed on the stone near the head of each. These brief records are graven in the characters of a dead language; and until they, and the other inscriptions of the temple, can be translated, we can know little of its real history, or of the meaning of the subjects depicted in the bas-reliefs.

The portion of this scene shewn in the photograph will give a general idea of the skill displayed in the execution of the whole subject. Viewing it as a work of art, it will compare favourably with any of the Assyrian bas-reliefs of a like nature. It would be difficult indeed to conceive of a more animated representation of a battle scene. How admirably that horse is represented, in the upper part of the picture, plunging into the thick of the enemy's ranks; while its well-poised rider, with sword in hand, is preparing for the deadly work before him. Then, again, beneath: it was no mean knowledge of art that suggested the forcible contrast of the wounded horses in the chariot of the chief, who is vainly resisting the upraised spear of his enemy. The position of the soldiers, shewn in the lowest left corner of the picture, conveys some information regarding the mode in which the infantry fought, indicating that they were well-disciplined and accustomed to the usages of war: they are advancing with upraised spears behind a rampart of shields.*

The chariot represented, and more especially its wheel, conveys some idea of the advanced stage which the ancient Cambodians had reached in the minor details of constructive art. A wheel to combine in a higher degree the elements of strength with that of lightness could not be constructed by the most accomplished artizan of the present day; while to stand the rough usage of a war chariot, it must have been, if not entirely, partly constructed of metal; so that had we no further proof, the inference may be fairly drawn, that the builders were skilled in the use of metals.† In another of the bas-reliefs, however, we find mechanical appliances used for the torture of human beings, such as a double-handed saw or knife; a lever, where the power is being applied by muscular force—the fulcrum a strong rope, and the weight a human body; and alongside of this we find criminals being pounded in a mortar—all of which appliances, although used as instruments of torture in this case, must have been in common use in the arts of the ancients.

* The mode of attack, and the form of shield, suggests to me a comparison with the dyaks of Borneo.

† In Bangkok, in one of the king's temples, there are a number of idols and bronze lions, said to have been brought from Nakhon Wat.



XIV.—BAS-RELIEF OF TRIUMPHAL PROCESSION.

THE subject of this picture is a triumphal procession returning from battle. It would appear, from the number and position of the horses and riders, that they had disciplined cavalry in those days. They have nothing of the kind in Cambodia at present, and they have no horses which, in height, bear the same proportion to their riders. The native horses of Cambodia are, like the ponies of Sumatra, small, not much over the size of our Shetland breed. We have here, therefore, some decided indications of a foreign, probably Tartar, element existing at an early period in Cambodia. This, however, in common with the indications we find in the general buildings of a knowledge of classical architecture, is left for the careful investigation of future and more erudite explorers. The bas-relief from which this is taken appears to represent an army returning from battle. The captives—men, women, and children—are guarded by cavalry in front and rear, and appear to be of different nations, as the costumes are totally different. A chief, for example, seated on an elephant, wears a helmet terminating in what appears to be the horns of a deer, similar to the helmets worn by Japanese archers, which form part of the King of Siam's body guard at the present time. A species of armour covers his shoulders, and falls from the back of the helmet to the waist. An ornamental belt round the waist supports a similar protection that covers the limbs. His followers on foot are similarly dressed; they are preceded by an advanced guard of cavalry, and appear to be prisoners of war.

The only resemblance we can trace between the horses of this and those of the Assyrian bas-reliefs, is in the cropped mane.* The harnessing of the head is different, and in the Cambodian example we have what looks like armour on the neck of the horse. The jacket of the rider, also, appears to be of a stiff material, probably intended to resist arrow points. The lower portion of the picture represents the beginning of the subject, where human torture is depicted in its most revolting forms. It is curious to find here that the dress of the sufferers is identical (what is left of it) with that of those who are having the worst of it in battle (see battle scene, p. 6), and that of their persecutors with the dress of the conquerors. We might infer from this that the contest was for the establishment of a new religion or kingdom, and that those who would not receive it were tortured in the manner represented in the bas-relief.†

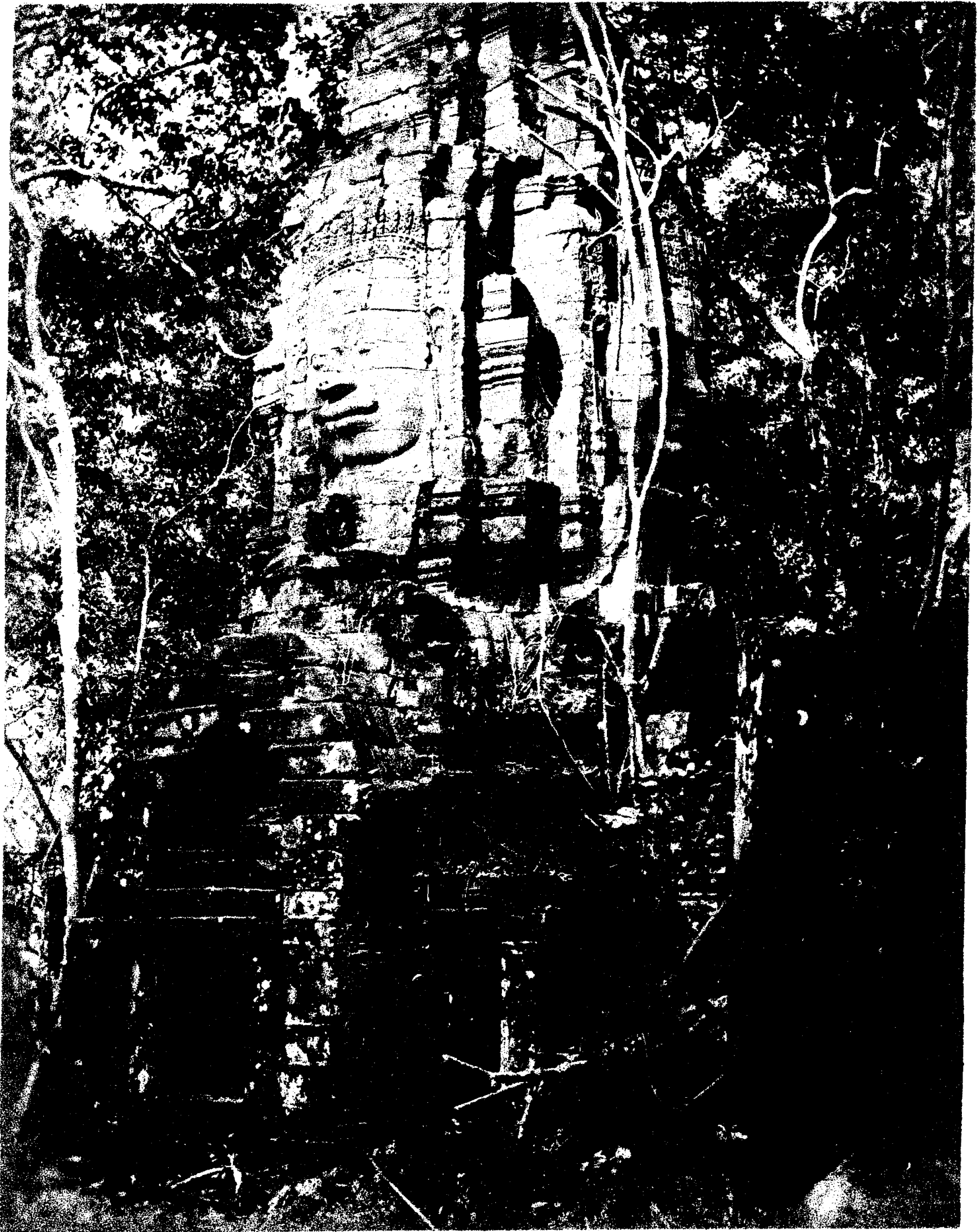
* Lamy's Niniveh, vol. II, p. 36.

† *Burma in Cambodia*. Geographical Society, Feb. 1865.



XV.—PREA SAT LING POUN.

THIS subject embraces one of the towers of "Prea Sat Ling Poun" (the place where they play hide-and-peek). This is a modern name given by the natives, on account of the labyrinth of passages and apartments that occur beneath the towers. This temple is so much shrouded with forest trees, climbing vines, and thorny brushwood, that it was only after a hard day's cutting, with a party of natives, that we succeeded in clearing the tower sufficiently to obtain a photograph. This edifice, like Nakhon Wat, occupies nearly a square, measuring from 400 to 500 feet each way. It, too, has an outer corridor (the roof of which has fallen in). The back walls, like Nakhon Wat, are also adorned with bas-relief representations of battle scenes, &c. On one of these we found represented a huge engine of war in the form of a cross-bow, mounted on a wheeled vehicle resembling our modern gun carriage, and drawn by men. This subject occurs on the left of the south gateway of the temple. Our efforts to produce a plan of the building proved abortive, as we had not sufficient men to make the necessary clearings, and we would have been exposed at every step to the danger of being crushed by falling masses of stone, as some of the blocks seemed to depend for their position upon the vines that were coiled, like a multitude of cables, around them. The building, as nearly as we could ascertain, has one great central tower, with fifty minor ones, corresponding to that shewn in the photograph, grouped around it. Each tower is surmounted with the four-faced Phrohm (Brahma). The passages beneath, in the lower storey of the temple, are so numerous and intricate that we frequently found difficulty in extricating ourselves from the labyrinth, while their dark, damp, interiors were suggestive of the scene of a nightmare. As we advanced, rifle in hand, every step brought down flights of shrieking bats that flapped their clammy wings against our faces.



XVI.—PALACE OF THE LEPROUS KING.

THE Prasat Chow Ke-rhuen (palace of the leprous king) is situate a little to the north-west of "Phra Sat Ling Poun," and nearly in the centre of the city. On the walls of the outer enclosure of this palace a procession of elephants are sculptured in alto-relievo. The procession appears to represent a hunting party passing through a forest, as a variety of trees fill up the background, and animals, such as the stag, are sculptured beneath; while the elephant shewn in the photograph is carrying what appears to be an animal coiled up in its trunk. The figures seated on the saddles are armed with bow and arrow. In another part of this building, figures of Garuda support the entablature of a causeway in place of pillars, as in the case of the Cariatides of Greece.

The leper king, after whom this place is named, is said to have died of leprosy, for having deserted the snake-worship of his forefathers. The tradition goes on to say, that after having married the snake god's daughter, he erected the image of the four-faced Phrohmn over the gateway of the city, and also over the towers of his temple, to scare away the enraged parent. An angel is also said to have descended from heaven in the shape of a physician, who offered to remove the king's distemper by plunging him into a trough of boiling medicine. His majesty, strange to say, was incredulous. The physician, in a fit of rage, entered a fiery chariot, and ascended to heaven, having upset the trough, and the king died.*

* Some intelligent natives informed us they were quite sure they knew where the medicine was still to be found.

