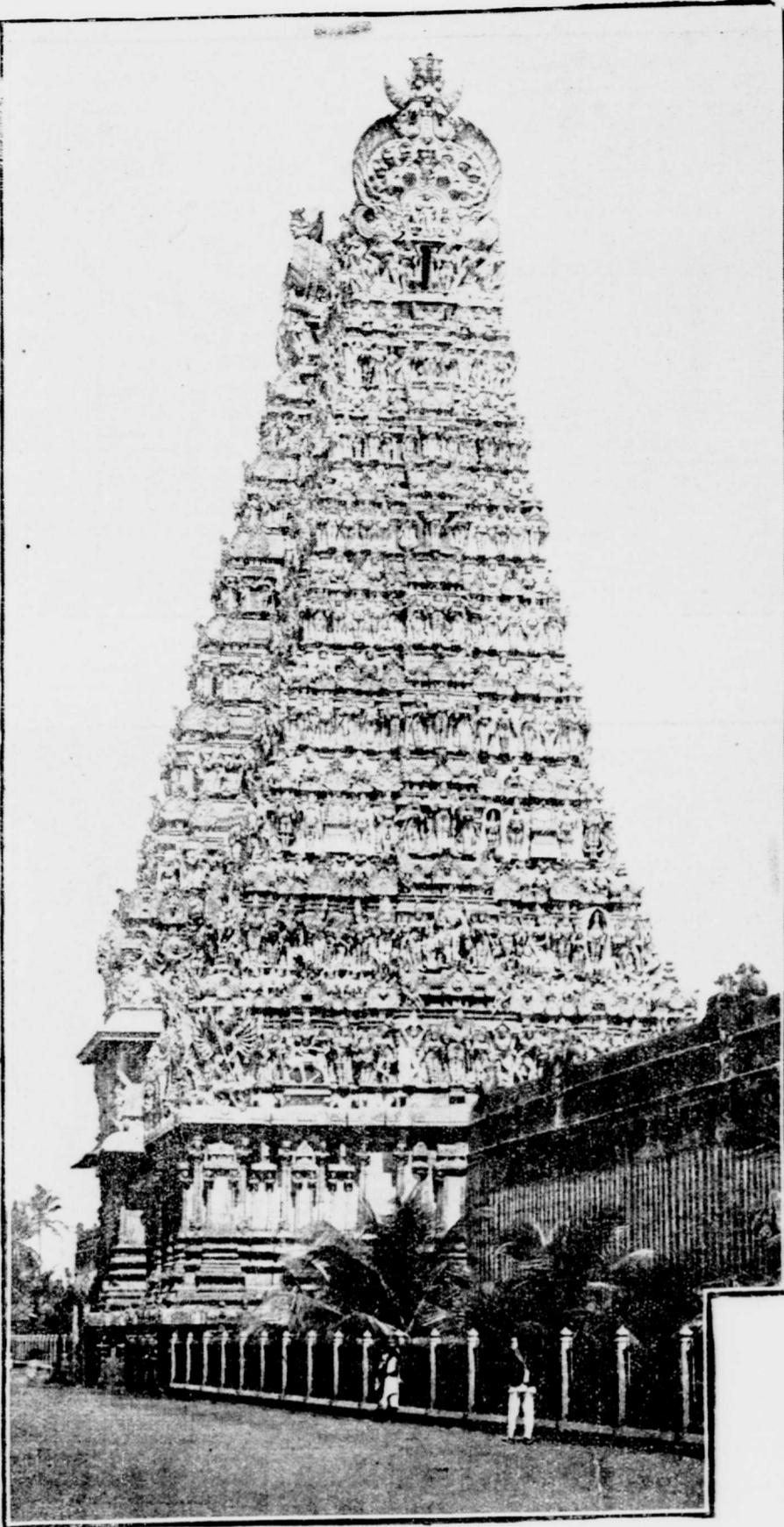


LASTING INFLUENCE WAS LEFT UPON THE ARCHITECTURE OF INDIA BY A FORMER INVASION OF AFGHAN



THE GREAT COPURA, OR PAGODA, IN THE TEMPLE AT MADURA, INDIA. The carvings of human beings and animals are life size.



THE HALL OF A THOUSAND PILLARS. The carvings represent hunting scenes.

ROCKS BECOME TEMPLES.

Indian Shrines Dug Out of Heart of Solid Stone.

The present effort of bands of Afghans to push their way into India through the passes of the mountain bulwark of the strange Oriental empire of Edward VII is not likely to occupy the place in history gained by a similar invasion by the same restless people upward of a thousand years ago. Tommy Atkins was not in the way then, and the history of nearly one-fifth of the population of the earth was changed. As a result, nearly one-fourth of the chocolate skinned inhabitants of India are Mahometans, and many of the famous architectural remains of that great country bear the marks of the type that has developed under Mahometan culture.

The great temples and other structures which one sees scattered from one end of India to the other are puzzles more trying to the Occidental mind than any "pigs-in-clover" ever devised. There is something about a "pigs-in-clover" puzzle which suggests that it can be solved and entices to solution, but when one turns his eyes toward the hot, cloudless sky of India and looks upon the side of a pagoda towering two hundred feet into the air, every inch of whose surface is covered with a seemingly endless variety of life-size figures in brute and human form, his courage fails him. Many questions suggest themselves, which he has not the patience to answer. What do all these figures, unlike anything in the skies, the earth or under the earth mean? Who had the patience to carve so many of them? How long did it take to erect these pagodas? Not all of them can be answered.

There are hundreds of examples of architecture illustrating many phases of the religious and architectural development of India, beginning with the Buddhistic structures erected 250 B. C., and running down through the centuries of Brahminism, Jainism and Mahometanism. Indian architecture contains a mystery. It is a fully developed style which experts say cannot be traced to any other known type of architecture and the steps of whose development have been lost. It is the Bengalese, in which the pyramid has curvilinear sides.

If any one, after trying to fathom the intricacies of Indian architecture at short notice, finds it difficult to discover what the builders were driving at, he may be comforted by learning from Fergusson, an authority on the subject, that all the Hindu architect craved was a place on which to display his powers of ornamentation and his cleverness in overcoming difficulties. He covered every part of his building with the most elaborate and difficult designs he could invent.

In a land in which half the inhabitants can raise all the food necessary for the support of the other half it is easy to understand how the native princes in earlier times, with all this labor at their disposal, could turn their attention to the construction of temples hollowed out of the granite mountainside by the chisel, or the erection of pagodas and columns by the thousand entirely covered with the figures of countless creatures.

There are more than thirty temples and a thousand monasteries cut out of the living rock. Some of these, curiously, are shaped like Christian churches, although the hands that hollowed them had probably never heard of the founder of the Christian faith. They date from the century of His birth, and the best known and largest of them, that of Karli, possibly was dug before the dawn of the Christian era.

One of the best known of the famous rock temples is one at Ellora, generally called the Kylas, in which not only the interior but the exterior was cut out of a rock. The temple stands in the bottom of a rock pit which was excavated around it.

Occasionally, when the temple builders found a clump of rocks conveniently situated for the purpose, these would be sculptured into religious edifices. On the Coromandel coast, south of Madras, near the village of Sadras, between the hills and the seashore, are seven rocks rising from the sands. They have been shaped into five story monasteries and temples.

Contrary to what would be expected by some, this is believed to be a more economical method of obtaining temples than the modern process of piling up stones with cement between them. The stones of the modern church have to be quarried and often transported a great distance and then piled up. In the sculptured temple the rock is simply quarried out around the proposed building. The troubles of the builders are reduced to a minimum, for there is only the union of quarrymen to be considered.

The great pagodas are found in the southern part of India, the section occupied by the Dravidians, the primitive stock of Hindustan, who have been pushed down into the lower part of the peninsula by the incoming Aryans and Afghans. The Dravidians did things backward. At least, that is the way they built their temples. Apparently they started the buildings without any definite idea of what they would look like when they were finished, trusting to faith.

Instead of making the holy of holies, the altar of the god to be worshipped, the climax in size and decoration, it often was the meanest part of the great structure. There were three or four features which they counted upon having in the temple. The first was a small cubical structure lighted by such daylight as could struggle in through the doorway. This contained the image, or images. Outside of this was a porch, which further served to give privacy to the god. The cell was sometimes surmounted by a pyramidal roof.

This was surrounded by a wall in which was a gateway opposite the entrance to the cell. Over this gateway was a gopura, or pagodalike structure, covered with figures. From time to time additional rectangular inclosures were added.



CURIOUS ARCHITECTURE ON THE WATERFRONT. The three miles of waterfront of the sacred mosques and the pinnacles of the temples are visible in the background. (Stereograph, copyright 1908.)