

# Northern Messenger

VOLUME XXXIII., No. 3.

MONTREAL AND NEW YORK, MARCH 4, 1898.

30 Cts. Per An. Post-Paid

## The Worship of the Bromo in Java.

(By W. B. D'Almeida, in 'Frank Leslie's Magazine.')

A few years ago I found myself in Java, and being very anxious to see the remnant of Brahminism in this island, I was advised to see their great festival, the worship of the Bromo. This ceremony is so called, because on a certain day in October the Brahmins assemble in large numbers in the extinct crater of the Bromo, to propitiate the evil genius whose groans, as they term it, are heard from the only portion of this volcano which remains in an active state.

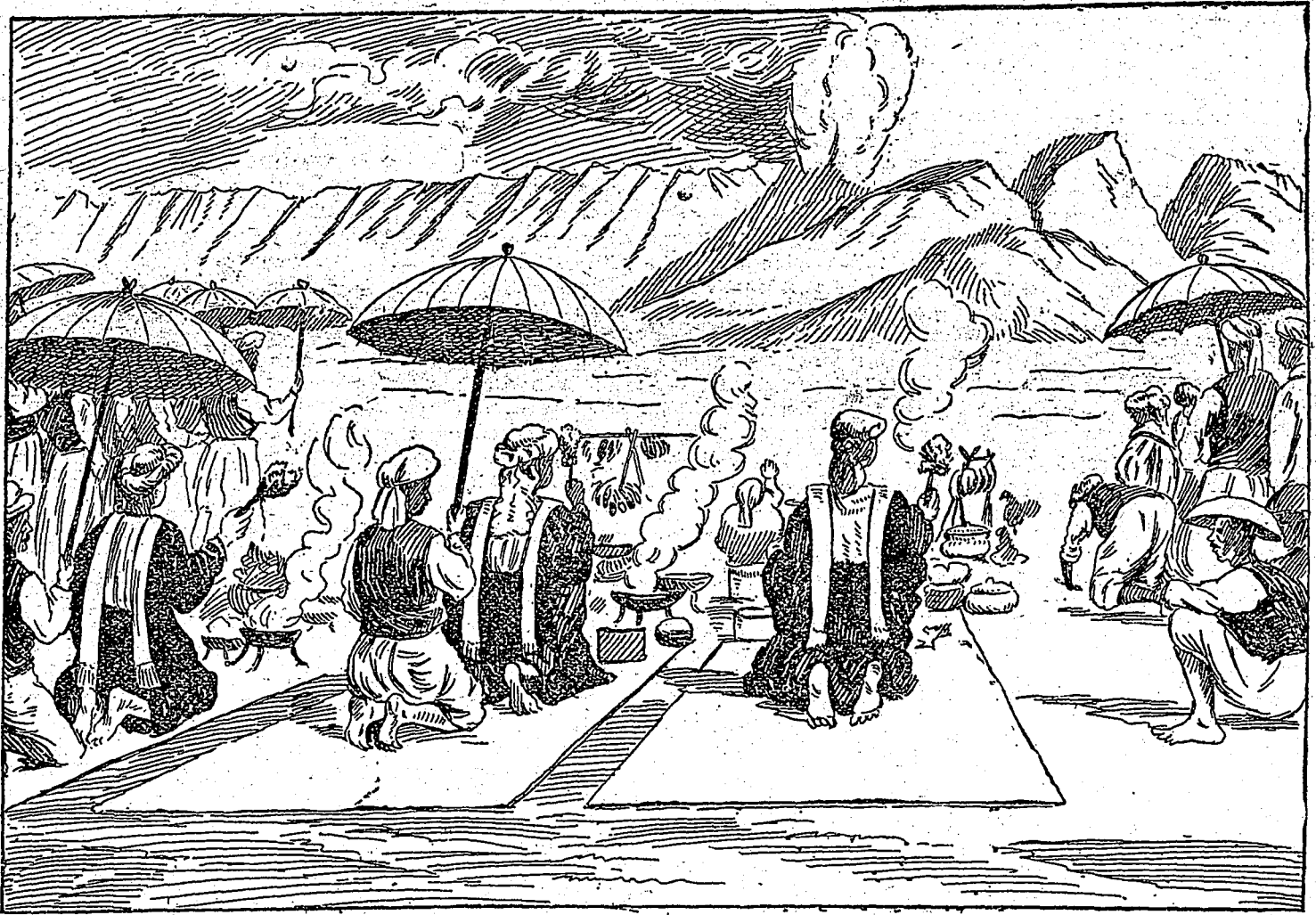
To this presiding genius, known to them as the Pungooroo Gunong, or keeper of the

through a picturesque country, we reached the flagstaff mountain. Here the green slopes give way to a tall, yellow grass, to bushy, prickly shrubs and plants, spreading out like beautiful rhododendrons bearing delicate pink flowers.

A ride of a mile and a half further brought us to the foot of the Mungal—another high cone—where we dismounted and walked to the top, whence we had a bird's-eye view of the enormous extinct crater at our feet, said to be the largest in the world, being about four or five miles in diameter. The sketch only gives a very small portion of the entire circumference. Beneath us was the Dasar, or floor of the crater, called also, from the wrinkles on the surface, which resemble a sea bed at the ebb of the tide—the Sagara

this spot we saw a large number of people assembled in groups, who were eating and praying, or chatting, laughing and singing. In the crowd walked the Wodonos and Mantries—that is, heads of small villages or districts—gaily dressed, with their burnished krissees glittering amid the folds of their sarongs, or large piece of colored silk hanging over the skirt from the waist; while behind each was seen a small retinue, some carrying long spears, and one of whom bore a large gilt umbrella. There were also Arab vendors of amulets, charms, and vials of dye for the eyelids and for the nails.

A large space was devoted to the offerings, chiefly of fruit, hung on wooden stands, and baskets of poultry, and on one side were spread about twenty mats, on which were



PROPIITIATING THE SPIRIT OF THE VOLCANO.

mountains, fruit and poultry are offered in abundance, and when we heard his growling at the guest-house at Tosari, about fifteen miles away, one of our servants remarked that it was the way the evil spirit manifested his desire for human flesh. To come to Tosari from Surabaya is a distance of at least seventy miles or more. Tosari is in the range of a wild mountain district, green with vegetation, at an altitude of 4,000 feet above the sea level.

Early in the morning our party of eight—three Europeans and five natives—made a start for the Bromo. After passing through endless fields on the mountain slopes covered with European vegetables as luxuriant as they are at home, and continuing on our way for some miles over a winding road

Wadi, or Sand Sea. This seemed but a short leap from where we stood, so we were, therefore, surprised to be told by Van Rhee that it would take a quarter of an hour to descend.

Our descent on pony-back proved to be rather difficult, for the path was very slippery and the way narrow, being cut out or excavated in the mountains. The earth on each side was composed of clay and sand, veined with lines of chalk as we approached 'the floor,' this changed to charred stone, gravel and cinders. We set our ponies, which resembled wild Arabs, over a sandy desert, at full speed, and in a short time reached a spot about a mile from the actual Bromo, or active volcano, from which issued dense smoke and a wild deafening noise. At

patriarchal and juvenile-looking priests, kneeling in the Arab fashion, their bodies partly resting on the calves of their legs. Before them were small boxes containing sandal-wood, frankincense, and spices for sale or for burning in small wooden censers, and a basket of finely plaited rattan containing water, and near it a goupillon, or holy-water sprinkler, of rolled-up banana leaves with flowers fixed on the top. Behind each pondita, or priest, sat a boy holding a large payong, or umbrella.

The priests wore white robes or gowns over the usual skirt, fastened round the waist by a broad red belt. Over the shoulders hung down two stoles of yellow silk, bound with scarlet tassels and coins fringing the ends. A large turban ornamented with