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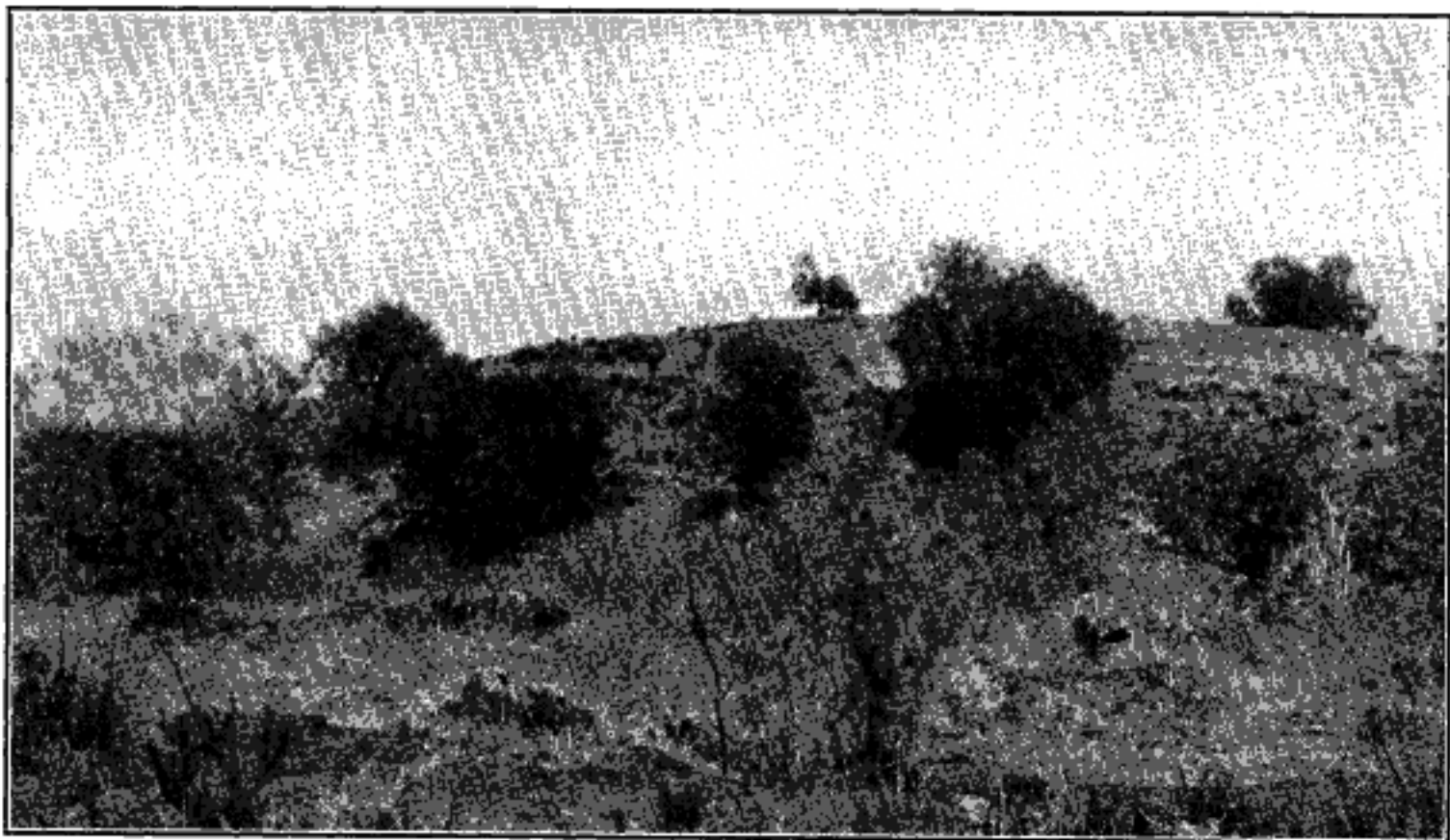
CUICUILCO AND THE ARCHAIC CULTURE OF MEXICO

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IN April, 1922, the writer, in company with Dr. Manuel Gamio, then director of anthropology in the Mexican government, visited a hill near San Fernando in the Federal District of Mexico which is surrounded by a lava flow known as the "Pedregal." There were some slight indications that the hill was not natural but was a ruin so old that time had obliterated all trace of its existence except this pile of rock covered with trees and overgrown with grass and brush. But here was a mound up whose sides had crept waves of black flinty lava that

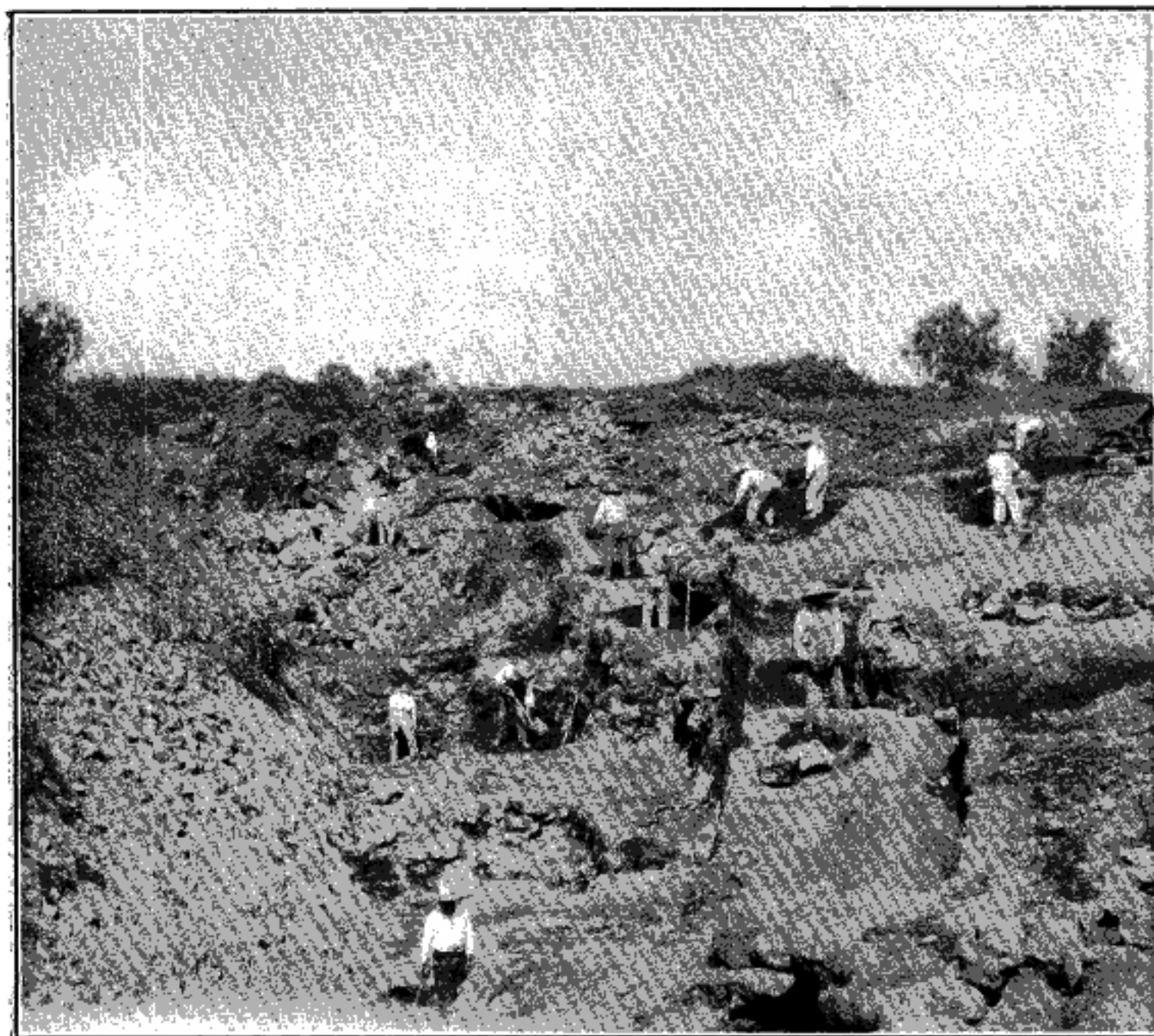
held the hill in a vice-like grip and sealed everything beneath from curious eyes. If it should prove to conceal a ruin, we had something here that might throw much light on the archaic culture of the Valley of Mexico. The venture appealed to the writer, and Dr. Gamio gladly assented to the request for permission to excavate there. The Mexican government furnished some men and the work started. Nine months were spent there through cooperation between the Mexican government and the University of Arizona. In July, 1924, the work



CUICUILCO BEFORE EXCAVATION



BLASTING AND REMOVING LAVA FROM THE NORTHEASTERN SLOPE.

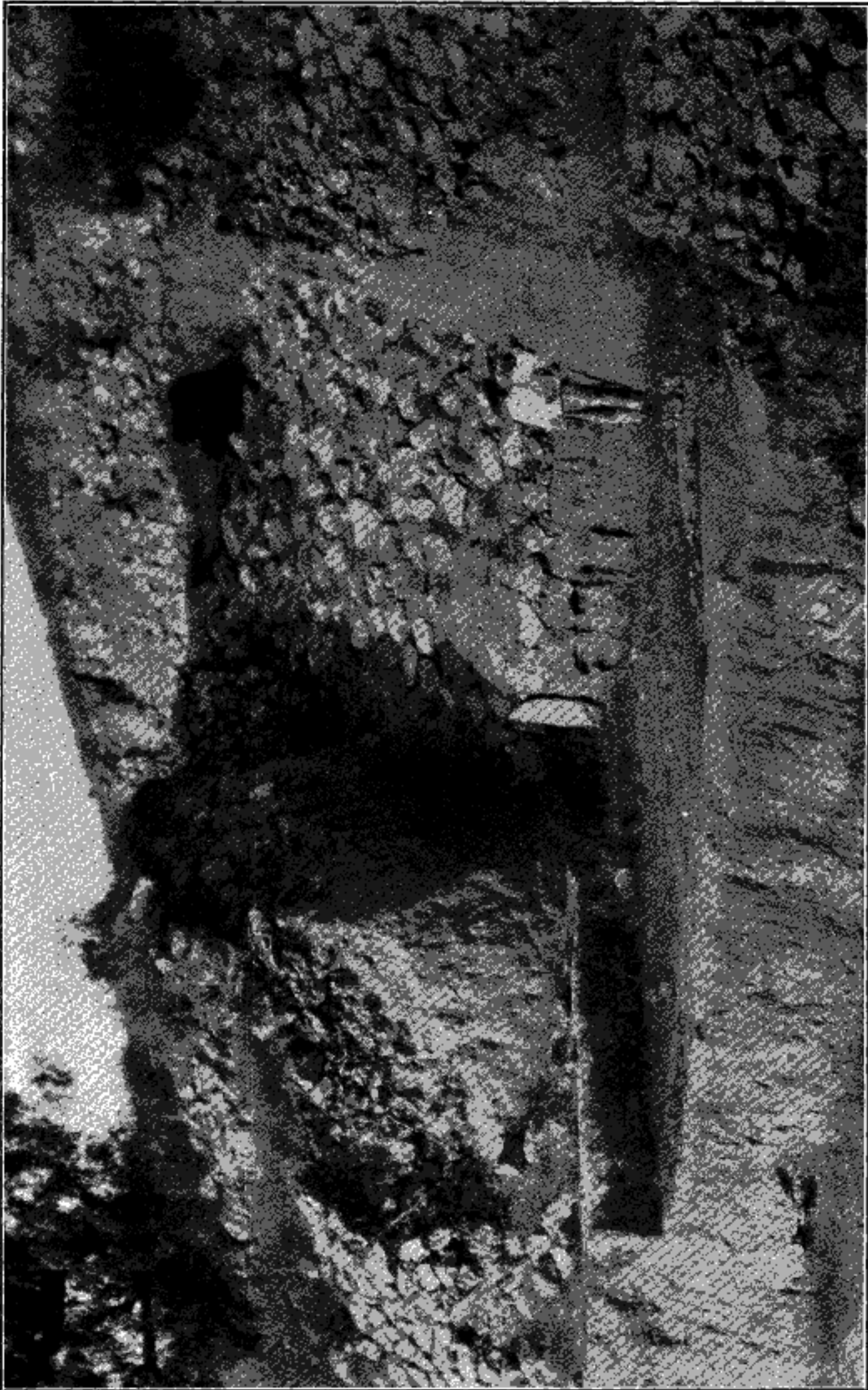


UNCOVERING THE SOUTHEASTERN SLOPE.

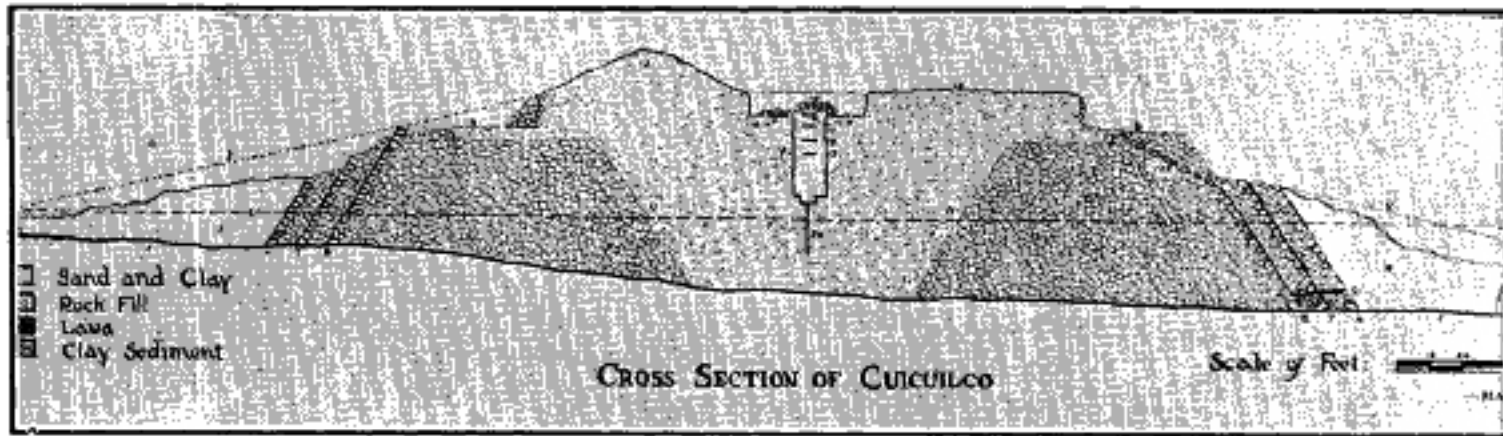
was resumed under the auspices of the National Geographic Society, the Mexican government and the University of Arizona and continued until September, 1925.

The mound proved to be an old temple built in the form of a truncated cone, with a diameter at the base of 387 feet, and at the platform of 291 feet, and a height of 74 feet. A cone of rock erected on this platform raised the total height to approximately 90 feet. The base lies buried beneath from 25 to 33 feet of clay, rock and lava, and the original top platform is covered with 18 feet of accumulated sand and clay and of clay and rock of later construction.

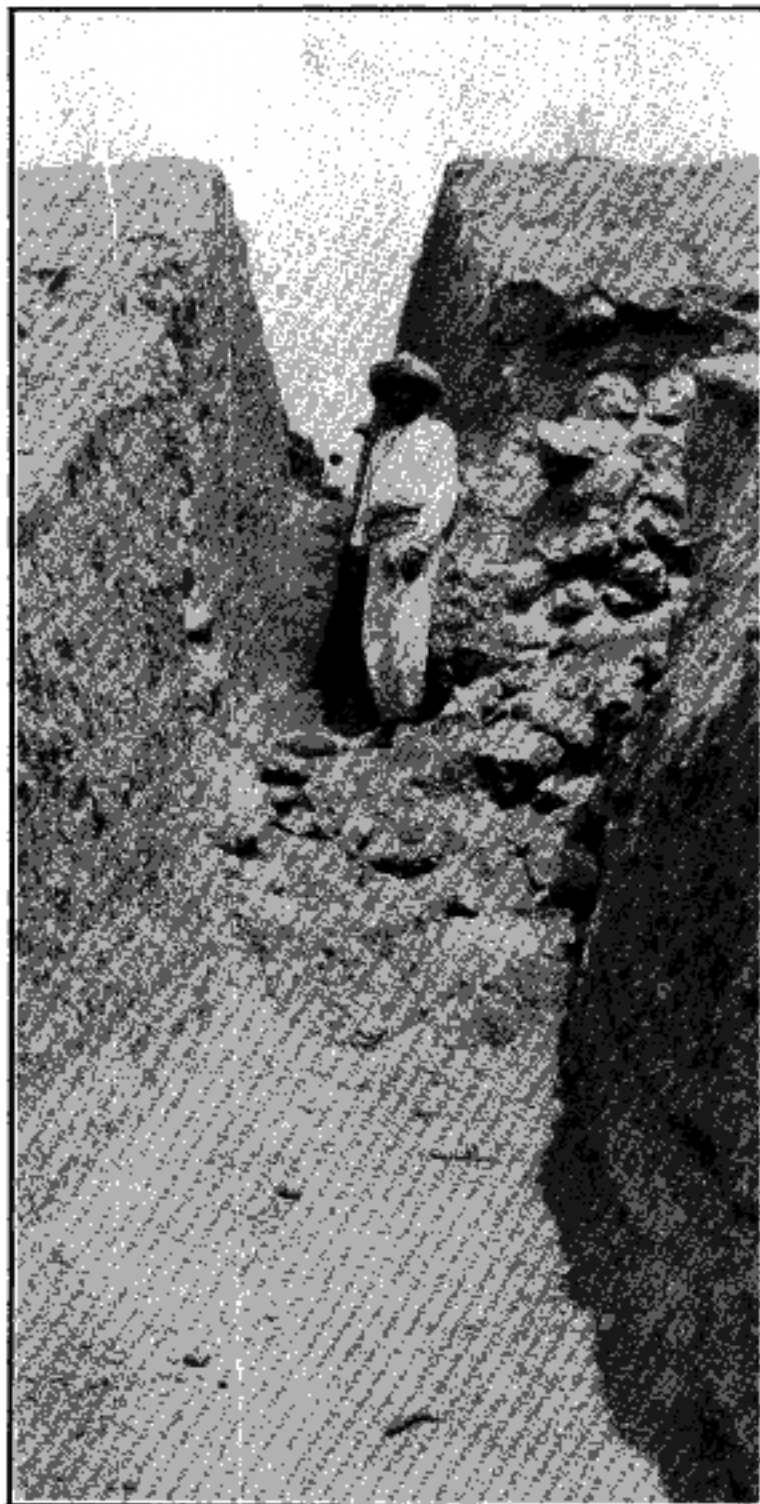
It was built like a great circular rampart of loose rock, with a central filling of clay and sand. This stone rampart is 70 feet wide on top and covers almost the entire area on the bottom. It is built of irregular chunks of lava thrown together and the holes filled with smaller pieces. The outer surface wall consists of large chunks of lava fitted together with some care at an incline of an average of forty-five degrees. The inner ends are bedded in smaller pieces of lava and the wall thus rendered quite compact and solid; but none of the stone has been surfaced in any way and there is no mortar or filling material of any kind, except the small stone. In the rock



THE OLDEST EASTERN ENTRANCE.



PROBABLE CONSTRUCTION.

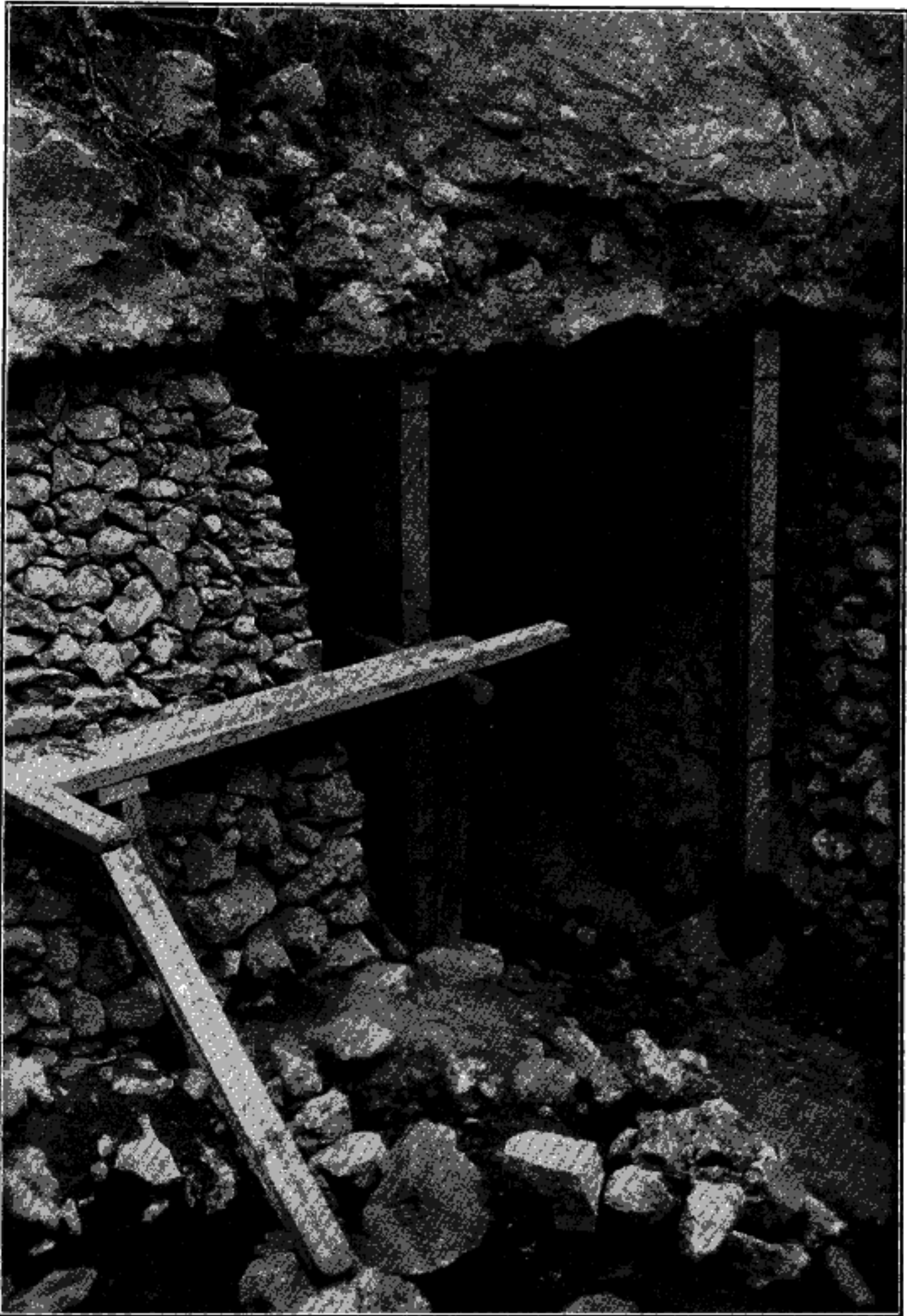


UNCOVERING THE TOP OF THE TEMPLE.
SHOWING CROMLECS SURROUNDING

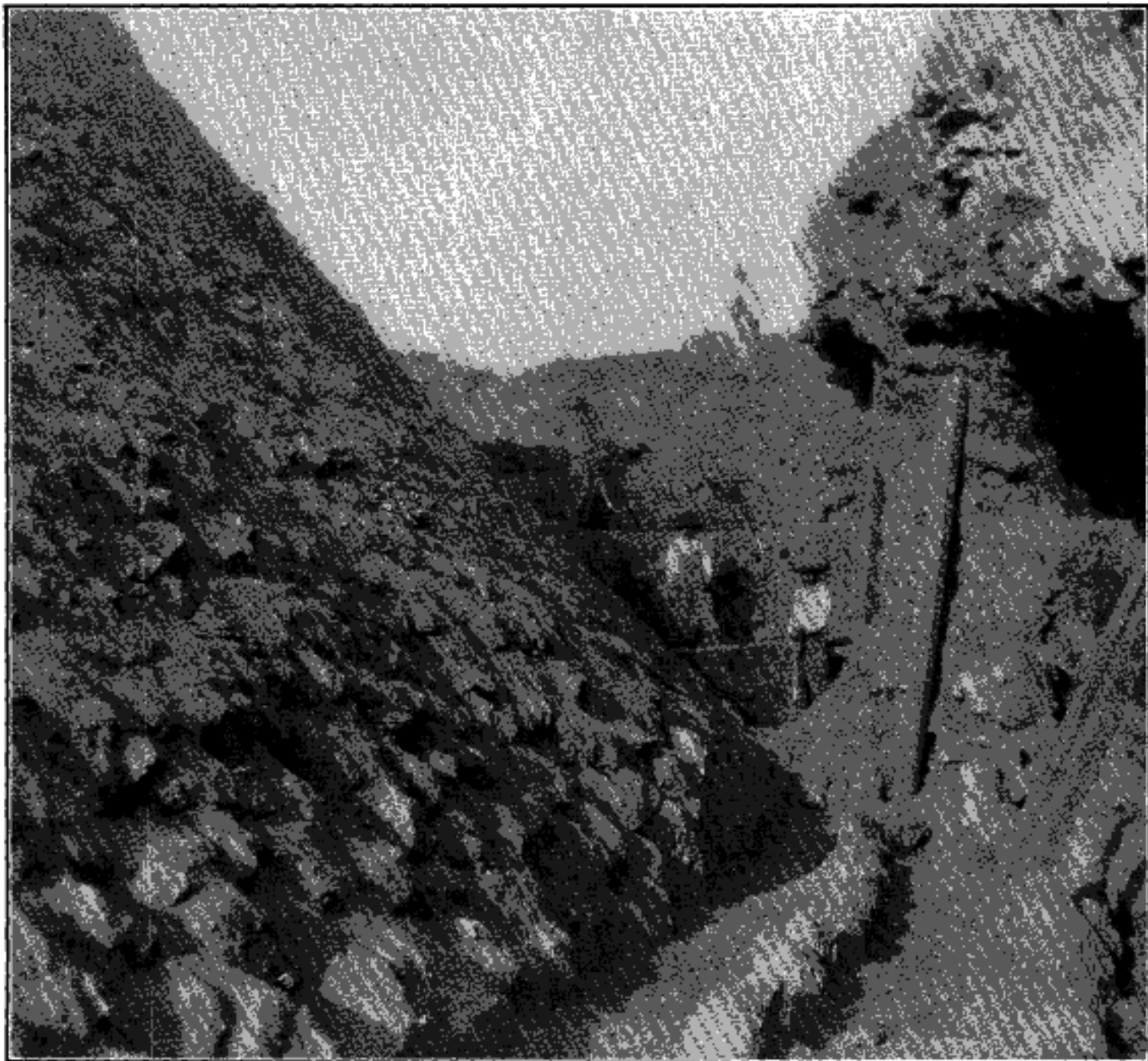
portion of the top platform, the cracks and holes were filled with small stone and then the whole covered with a layer of clay that had been packed down by the tread of many feet.

Extending away from the structure two degrees north of east was an inclined causeway 86 feet wide. The rock fill behind the northern wall is 28 feet wide and behind the southern wall 16 feet wide with a central filling of clay 42 feet wide. This ascending causeway led from the surrounding plain to the bottom of a low incline made of huge boulders that led to the original platform. This boulder incline has a width of 33 feet and a height of 27½ feet, and this is the only approach to a stairway found in the entire structure. It requires very little imagination for one to see a gaily decorated procession of ancient tribal priests slowly mounting that long incline and stepping from boulder to boulder up that last ascent to the great dancing place on top. Here they formed and faced the east to catch the first rays of the Sun Father, as he sent his rejuvenating light and heat upon the haunts of men. Can you not hear their glad acclaims as they move in joyous harmony to their tum, tum! tum, tum! and chant their prayer of welcoming thanksgiving to their All-Father?

From the western side extended slightly to the south of direct west another inclined plane leading from the



TUNNEL BENEATH THE LAVA ON THE EASTERN SIDE. THE TIMBERS ARE 16 FEET HIGH.



THE EASTERN SLOPE BELOW THE LAVA.

top platform out some 150 feet from the base of the temple. This grand approach was 45 feet wide. The sustaining wall with its rock fill behind it on the south side was 8 feet and on the north side $6\frac{1}{2}$ feet, leaving a clay fill of $30\frac{1}{2}$ feet. On the north side of both the eastern and western approaches the causeways have been widened by the addition on the western side by three walls, respectively 12, 14 and 6 feet in thickness, and on the eastern side by two walls each $6\frac{1}{2}$ feet thick. It would seem that the great force of inundations and floods had swept in from the northern side and necessitated the reenforcing of these projecting northern walls to pre-

vent the undermining of their bases and the sweeping away of the great approaches.

After the original temple had been used for some time, a later chief desiring to make a better impression upon the gods and demonstrate to his people the superior power and favor he was receiving direct from heaven, enlarged the earlier structure by building a wall 10 feet thick at the base and 6 feet thick at the top outside the original surface. The top of the first wall had been injured somewhat and fallen into ruin as evidenced by the repair work that had been done along the upper edge of the first structure. These walls were carried a