



PIESES ENTERING TEMPLE, SIAM.

lives are all their lifetime subject to bondage, a bondage to puerile and yet distressing fears?

For centuries the Buddhist temples have been the schools of Siam, and the yellow-robed priests the teachers, and the schooling only fits the boys for a lazy, aimless existence.

Cholera is very common in Siam, and the most common practice is to wear a few strands of cotton yarn about the neck or waist to keep off the evil spirits which bring the disease. Little trays containing offerings to the spirits are also placed by the side of the street or in a stream of water.

The Presbyterians of the United States commenced mission work in Siam in 1847, and after twelve years baptized their first Siamese convert. Now they have 308 communicants and 413 pupils in schools, and a working force of seven ordained missionaries, two medical missionaries, four single lady missionaries, nine married lady missionaries, two native licentiate preachers, and thirty-three native teachers and helpers. The American Baptist Missionary Union have missions among the Chinese of Siam.

OUR PERIODICALS:

Table listing various magazines and their prices, including Christian Guardian, Methodist Magazine, and others.

WILLIAM BRIGGS, Methodist Book and Publishing House, Toronto. 216 W. COATES, S. F. HERVIA, 27 St. Catherine St., Montreal, Wesleyan Book Rooms, Halifax, N. S.

Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK. Rev. W. H. Withrow, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, SEPTEMBER 22, 1900

CHINA AND ITS PEOPLE.

It is said that, if all the world's inhabitants were to march in procession, every third person would be Chinese. The extent and topography of the country are so varied that it difficult to describe them in general terms, but we are told by writ-



OFFERING TO THE PRIESTS, SIAM.

ers that there is scarcely a region of earth possessing soils of equal fertility. There is no desert, there is a sufficient rainfall and favourable degrees of heat and moisture for all vegetable production. Rice, a staple crop and raised all over the country, while all the cereals with which we are familiar are produced in abundance. The mountainous districts abound with trees of walnut, oak, camphor, ginseng, ebony and rosewood, and vast treasures of coal, iron, copper, lead and silver are known to be hidden in the hills and mountains, of whose value the Chinese have no conception. Marble, porphyry, lapis and granite, are produced from the quarries of South China, while precious jewels, as ruby, sapphire, topaz, garnet and opal, are found in the west. Consider the treasures which God has secreted in the bowels of the earth. Is it not as if he had said, Here are talents, use the powers I have given you to multiply them that everything which I have given me may show forth my power and forthought for my creature man, and by your toil produce according to your need Chinese history dates back before Abraham. Their civilization is the oldest in the world, and their inventions, such as the compass, porcelain, gunpowder, paper and printing, precede those of modern Europe by several centuries.

The written language of China is the same everywhere, while the spoken language has many dialects. General education is unthought of, and the masses are kept in ignorance. The system of agriculture is rude in the extreme. The Chinese are eminently a trading people, and their merchants are acute, methodical and sagacious. The province of Sz-chuen, the one chosen by our country as a mission field is said to be of such extent, population and wealth, as to be considered a fifth natural division of the empire. It is a great inland district, bounded by mountains, but in the main fertile, and its climate may be compared to the rolling prairies of Iowa.



APPROACHING THE KING, SIAM.

It is supplied by its own productions with all the necessities and some of the luxuries demanded by its population, and is generally regarded as one of the most favoured regions of the earth. The domestic and social life of the Chinese has many features in common with western nations. Respect and obedience to parents are enjoined and enforced. Family life is esteemed and cultured, though holiness exists.

The poor among the Chinese, like similar classes in our Christian lands, live under very unfavourable conditions—low houses, no ventilation, poor sewerage, etc., and prone diseases of various kinds, and generate morals. Gambling and opium smoking are universal. The drama is popular, but women are not allowed to appear on the stage. They are, as a people, indolent and selfish. The lower classes are professors of a kind of Buddhism, and the higher, of Confucianism or Taoism. The creed in which all agree is the worship of ancestors.—Outlook.

ANUNG PAL AND HIS NAIL.

In Hindostan the people tell a queer snake story. They believe that this world is held up on the head of a snake, called Seshnaga. Near the city of Delhi, visitors may see an iron column, like a cylinder, twenty-two feet high. This cylinder is sunk into the ground to the depth of twenty-two feet more. Well, the story the people tell about the iron column is that a man named Anung Pal had once conquered all northern India, and he was then advised by a learned Brahman to order that a long iron nail should be made and be sunk deeply into the earth, so as to pierce the head of the snake on which the world rested. The Brahman told Anung Pal that, if he would do this, his children would always rule over India. So Anung Pal, being of course desirous that his children and grandchildren

should for ever be rulers, ordered that the great nail, which was the iron column, should be made. The Brahman, in his wisdom told Anung Pal, who to all this "nail" into the earth, so that the head of the serpent Seshnaga would be lit; though I should think the people must have thought the world to be very thin, they believed that were two feet of "nail" could go through the world and pierce the head of the serpent besides!

The "nail" was sunk in its place, and the Brahman went away, and the years passed and Anung Pal continued to reign. But at last Anung Pal began to wonder about that nail. Had it really hit the serpent's head on the other side of the world, or not?

Anung Pal wondered so much about the nail that he had it drawn up from its place and looked at the point of the nail. And, oh, how greatly scared was the people were! For the point of the great nail was found to be coloured with blood, showing that the snake had really been driven at the right spot, and had hit the serpent's head!

The people hurried to put the nail back, hoping to drive it into the serpent's head again. But, like a snake of much common sense, the serpent Seshnaga, finding that the nail which had held him was gone, had moved his head out of the way! Alas, how sad a state of affairs was this!

Just then along came the Brahman who years before had advised Anung Pal to make that nail. How frightened his people were! How frightened his people were! "O rajah," cried the Brahman, "as nothing in the world could give this column the stability it has lost through thy impious curiosity, so in like manner could I have saved thee from thy dynasty thy approaching ruin!"

And not long afterwards the empire of the Tatars was overthrown by the Chinghans. Anung Pal could not see his people. And there near Delhi stands the iron "nail" and the people tell this story about it.



LADY GOING TO MORNING PRAYERS, SIAM.

SIX PLUS FOUR.

BY MARK PEYTON.

It was one day in the early springtime when Mrs. Robin started out to take the air. All her work was done, and she was awaking from her long sleep. The green leaves were just out on the trees, the birds were flitting from branch to branch, and best of all, the sky was blue and crocuses and violets were blooming in the gardens.

As Mrs. Robin hopped along, she thought how happy everything seemed, until suddenly, quite near her, she heard her name called faintly and in such a sad, little way that she began to look round, and there on the soft grass under an old oak tree lay Mrs. Woodpecker, fairly gasping for breath.

"My dear Mrs. Woodpecker!" said Mrs. Robin, "what is the matter?" "Just this," she answered; "I came here to see my old friend, Oak Tree, and as I was going up the trunk, kind Oak warned me, good friend, I will take you with a bow and arrow in his hand. Before I could hide, the arrow struck me, and as I fell, I heard him say, 'Good shot!'"

"Oh, I am so sorry!" began Mrs. Robin. "Can't I help you?" "No, dear Robin, but what will my little birdies do without me? There are six dear little eggs in the tree waiting for me."

Mrs. Robin thought of her own nest with its four blue eggs that Mr. Robin was at that minute watching, and then, looking at her dying friend, said, "Do not worry, good friend, I will take you to my nest and bring up your little ones like my own birdies."

"Oh! how can I thank—" but Mrs. Woodpecker lay dead, killed by a naughty boy who got for the fun of shooting an arrow. Mrs. Robin hurried away to send her mate for the six little speckled eggs. When the last one had been carefully placed in her nest with her own four, it was rather full. It was hard for her to



AN ANATOMY OF THE GUARD, SIAM.

sit on so many; but she managed it, and when one morning the six little peckers took their shells, she tended them like her own baby robins, and brought them up as good woodpeckers should be brought up.

A PLEASSED PATIENT.

A physician residing in New Hope, New Jersey, has a favourite dog, which usually meets him at the station. On a recent occasion, as the story goes, the doctor did not find him at the station. On reaching his house the doctor found the dog waiting for him on the porch, with another dog. As the doctor passed into the house his own dog remained outside, as well-bred dogs are taught to do. But the strange dog pushed in and overwhelmed the doctor with caresses. When he took a short rest the dog climbed up his breast upon the doctor's knee, and one paw affectionately upon his shoulder. This very demonstrative behaviour led to investigation, and upon examining the other paw a Becker's dog was found in the flesh. It was of course extracted. It could not be said in this case that the doctor's fee was "no great shakes," for the vibrations of the tail of the patient, as the doctor showed the greatest wonder at, as he trotted out. It is not remarkable or uncommon that a dog should, when in pain, appeal for help. But that a physician's dog should bring his master to a Becker's dog, certainly is a remarkable proof of animal sagacity.

AN HEROIC CAPTAIN.

Captain Becker, the skipper of a schooner that carries lumber on the Great Lakes, showed the greatest bravery last winter while at a wharf in Duluth.

The slip where the schooner lay was filled with broken ice, and a man named Barnes who was loading lumber on board Captain Becker's schooner, ventured too near the edge of the lumber piles. He was a heavy man, weighing over two hundred pounds, and the boards tipped under him, sending him down something like twenty-five feet into the icy waters of the slip. The man struck on one side, but immediately came to the surface and clutched in vain at the floating ice cakes for support. By the greatest effort he succeeded in keeping his head above water for a few moments.

Captain Becker had his overcoat on, but without a moment's hesitation, and without removing the heavy garment, he leaped down twenty feet between the icy walls of the boat and the face of the lumber pile. The daring man struck a projecting timber and was turned over. He alighted on his back, but was unharmed, and immediately took possession of the gigantic form of the drowning Barnes.

The latter was absolutely helpless by this time, and had assistance come a few seconds later it would have been his. With a few powerful strokes the life saver reached a piling in the face of the dock and assisted Barnes to get the latter's arms round it, where almost immediately they froze stiff in the wood. But men were, of course, promptly rescued.



EATING RICE, SIAM.