

# PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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The Thoughts That Came In.  
There were idle thoughts came in the door,  
And warmed their little toes,  
And did more mischief about the house  
Than any one living knows.

They scratched the table, and broke the chairs,  
And soiled the floor and wall;  
For a motto was written above the door  
"There's welcome here for all."

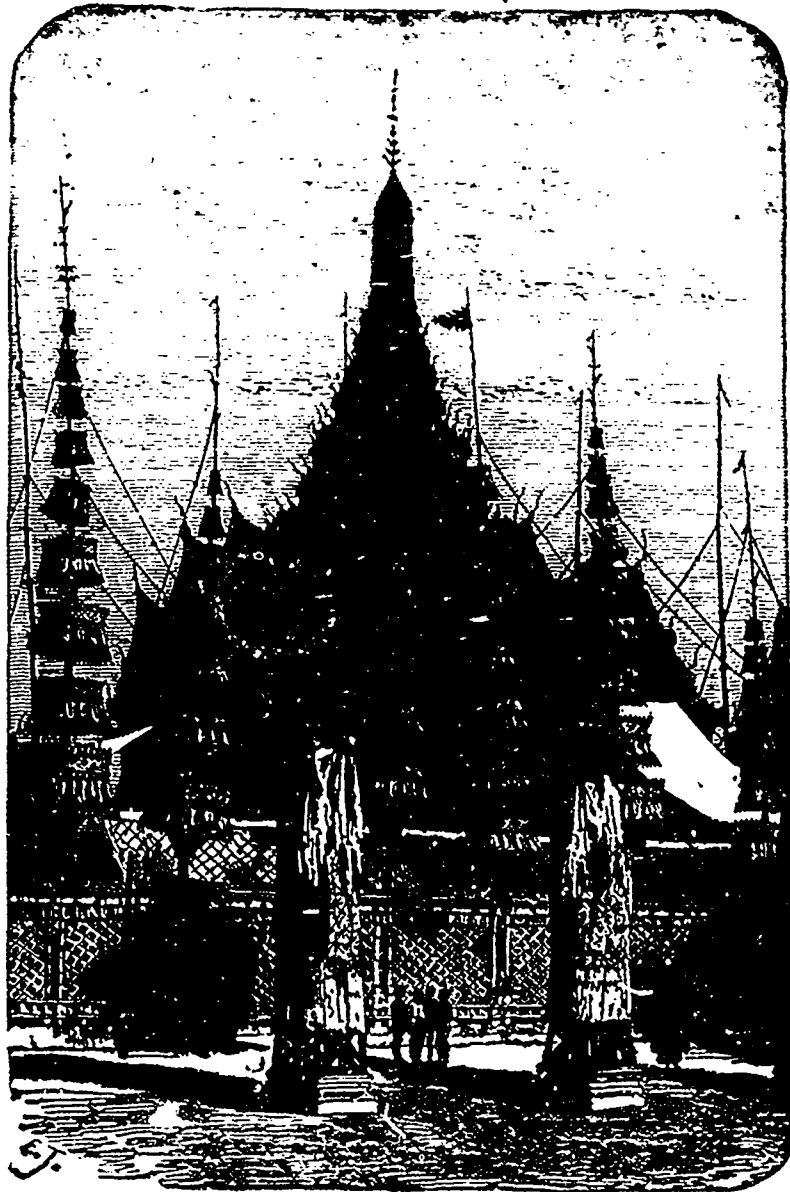
When the master saw the mischief done  
He closed it with hope and fear;  
And he wrote above, instead: "Let none  
Save good thoughts enter here."

And the good little thoughts came troop-  
ing in,  
When he drove the others out;  
They cleaned the walls, and they swept  
the floor,  
And sang as they moved about.

And last of all an angel came,  
With wings and a shining face;  
And above the door he wrote: "Here  
love  
Has found a dwelling place."

## SIAM AND ITS PEOPLE.

Siam is situated in Southeast Asia, east of Burma, and has an area of about 250,000 square miles, and a population of about 6,000,000. The Siamese are Buddhists, and Buddhism is said to exist with greater purity in Siam than in any other country. The Buddhists believe that each Buddha, in passing through a series of transmigrations, has occupied in turn the forms of white animals of a certain class, particularly the swan, the stork, the white crow and sparrow, the dove, the monkey, and the elephant; all of which are peculiar to Siam. There is, however, much diversity in the views of ancient Buddhist writers on this subject. Only one thing is certain, that the forms of these creatures are reserved for the souls of the good and the great. Thus, almost all white animals (the cat is excepted) are held in the deepest reverence by the Siamese, because they were once superior human beings, and the white elephant in particular is supposed to be animated by the spirit of some king or hero, perhaps the incarnation of a future Buddha. White elephants are supposed to avert national calamity, and to bring peace and prosperity; therefore they are greatly desired.



PAGODA OF BANGKOK, SIAM.

And yet the so-called white elephant is not white, but of the colour of burnt coffee, yellowish brown, or brownish yellow; or perhaps a Bath brick (used for cleaning knives) is more nearly the shade of the lighter ones.

Siam. Mrs. Leonowens, an English lady, who lived for six years in the palace at Bangkok, gives the following description of two of them:

"In Bangkok resides in gigantic state the wondrous 'sleeping idol.' This image

of Buddha is perhaps the largest idol in the world. It is a reclining figure, one hundred and seventy-five feet long and forty feet high, entirely covered with gold plate. The soles of this giant figure's feet are covered with carvings, inlaid with pearl and chased with gold. (The feet are five yards and more in length, and the toes each one yard.) On the nails of the toes are engraven Buddha's ten divine attributes: Pure, Unchangeable, Endowed with All Knowledge, Perfection, Knowing the Mystery of Creation, Without Sin, Unconquerable, Teacher of the Way to Bliss, Merciful, Adorable."

SUPERSTITIONS.  
Dr. E. A. Sturgo,  
of Siam, gives the

following interesting account of some Siamese superstitions:

The natives dread the supernatural beings which they believe fill the air, and have power to cause all manner of diseases. Therefore, the Siamese usually wear some charm to protect themselves from these unwelcome visitors.

"A Siamese mother does not feel at all pleased when you admire her child and remark upon its healthiness and beauty. They often say of a fine baby that it is an ugly, skinny little thing, for fear lest the spirits might hear it praised and take it away.

"One of their ways of preventing the return of the departed is to cut a hole in the side of the house. The coffin containing the remains is passed out through this opening, which is afterwards closed. They believe the spirits are so stupid that, should they return and not find the opening by which they came out, they will be unable to enter the house.

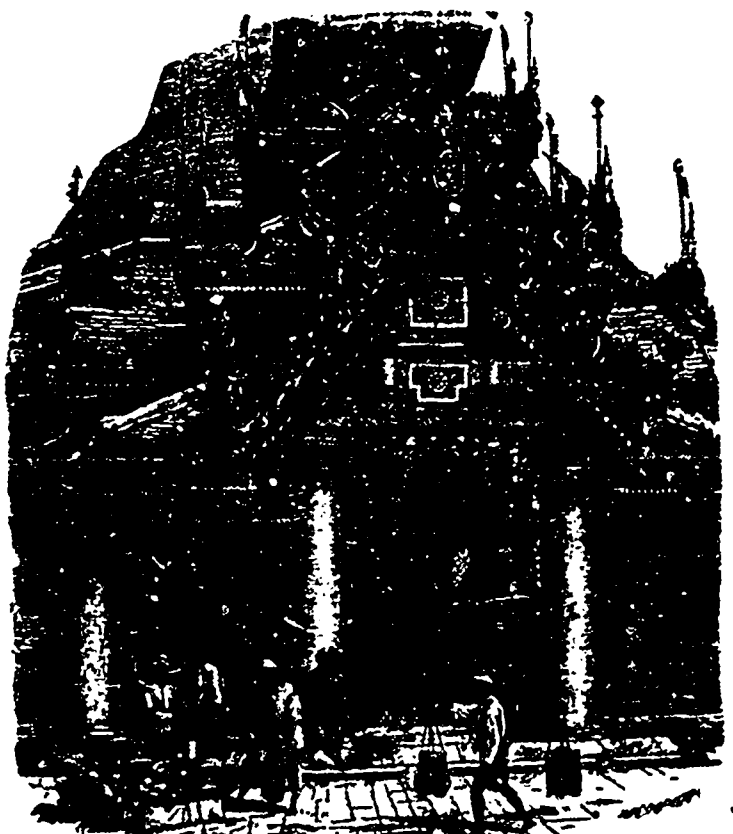
For the numerous diseases supposed to be caused by spirits, the Siamese have a large number of doctors who make a specialty of such cases. Sometimes the doctor may be seen standing by the sick bed brandishing huge knives and commanding the spirits, in loud and abusive language, to come out of the patient. For the accommodation of the spirits the natives make little houses resembling somewhat our bird-houses. These they place upon poles about five feet in height, and in them little offerings of fruit and flowers, and lighted incense sticks are set from time to time, to gain the favour of the spirits occupying their immediate neighbourhood. The water is also supposed to be the home of spirits, and when a person is drowned it is because of their anger. The natives are very slow in rendering assistance to a drowning person, fearing lest in doing so they may incur the enmity of these spirits, who, out of revenge, will visit upon them the punishment from which they rescue another.

"At certain seasons of the year offerings are made to the water spirits in a very singular way. Little rafts bearing lighted candles, food, and flowers, are placed upon the rivers and borne by the swift currents to the sea. Fishermen frequently make offerings at the large spirit shrines erected along the seashores before venturing upon the deep. The forests are also believed to be full of spirits, and there are certain places where the natives would be afraid to venture without first propitiating the genii of the place. Thus the minds of the na-



GREAT PAGODA COURT,

SIAM.



ENTRANCE TO TEMPLE.