

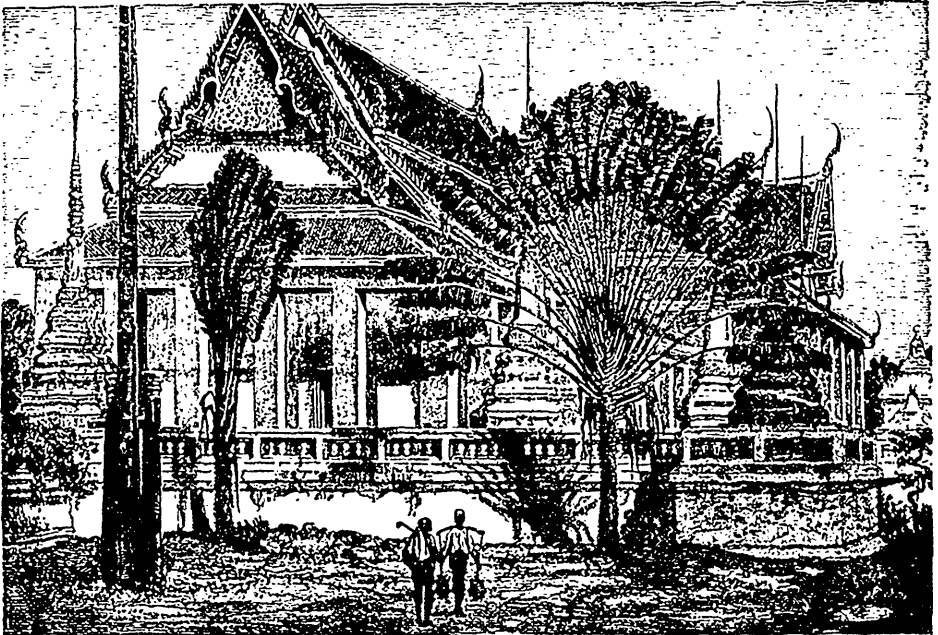
A SIAMESE TEMPLE.

As you turn into the principal avenue of the grounds of a Siamese temple, you will be apt to find figures of crouching lions, and of enormous stone griffins, representing the demon kings of the four regions who guard the world against the attacks of evil spirits.

On a sunny day you will find gathered in the area of the outer court a motley assemblage of priests, boys, and beggars, lazily basking in the sun or engaged in various

wax candles, incense-tapers, gold and silver tinsel ornaments, and offerings of fruits and flowers. Possibly some priests in yellow robes, with burning candles, are chanting liturgies; more probably, however, no priests are seen, but only people coming and going with gifts to Buddha.

Instead of the decorum usual in Christian churches, these worshippers are social and even noisy—one moment prostrate before the altar, the next singing an idle song. The women go about sprinkling the images with



pursuits—chewing betel-nuts, smoking, or playing chess; which latter is much the same game as our own. If it should happen to be a Siamese holy day, a busy multitude of all ages and both sexes, men, women, and children, will be passing to and fro, carrying offerings to the temple or going to hear Buddhist preaching.

Entering the building, you see an altar, eight or ten shelves high, tapering to a gilded point. It contains many different-sized figures of Buddha, together with a display of

perfumes, and offering lighted incense rods, fresh lotus and other flowers, fruits and clothes of various descriptions. Little children three years old go through with their prostrations before the images with great composure and gravity.

The best Siamese images are made of bronze or brass, though there are also silver and plate-gold idols. These idols are not found only in the temples, but are everywhere—on mountain-tops, in caves, and in the homes of the people.—S. S. Visitor.