

SIAM:

OR,

THE HEART OF FARTHER INDIA.

BY

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A Resident of Siam.

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last, 57. Total number entered, 559; value of cargoes as already stated, \$7,104,361. In 1881 there were 585 vessels with cargoes worth \$6,279,484.

The exports amount to a little more, averaging a little over two-thirds of a million per month. The greatest value, I noticed, was for July, 1883, when the report was \$1,120,539. The principal articles are rice, sugar, pepper, and peas; rose, ebony, teak, sepan, and agrilla woods; salt and dried fish; mussels and shrimps; hemp; ox and buffalo hides, horns, bones, and hoofs; elephant and rhinoceros hides and bones; tiger and other skins; cardamums, cotton, gamboge, stielac, indigo, gumbenjamin, lotus and other seeds; tobacco, tamarinds, betel-nuts, cocoa and ground-nuts; turtle shells, raw silk, fish maws, sharks, armadillo and snake skins, birds'-nests, ponics, and cattle.

The street scenes are often very comical. The houses in the markets are so made that the front can all be taken down in the daytime, and the whole inner room and its contents exposed to view. If they have counters, they fill nearly the whole room, which is often not more than ten by eight feet, and upon it the merchant sits in the midst of his goods. The whole family, which usually lives in or back of the store, comes and goes at its own sweet will; and often the baby's hammock is swung from the ceiling, and the little one is cared for while customers are waited on. All sorts of trades are carried on in sight of every passer-by. You stop at a restaurant or bakery, and you see the inmates prepare the food or cake before your very eyes. The blacksmiths and tanners are hammering for dear life; and the tailors cutting and sewing, but always on the alert to sell a needle or a half dozen buttons.

In the barber-shops you can see the luckless Chinaman squirming and making faces while he sits on a high stool with neither back nor foot board, and has his ears picked, his head and eyebrows shaved, and his eyelashes and beard

CHAPTER IX.

A ROYAL CREMATION.

IN contrast to the scenes described in a former chapter, read this account of the cremation of Her late Majesty the Queen of Siam, and of Her late Celestial Highness the Infant Princess Chowfah Kanabhorn. It occurred in 1881, and is the last burning I have witnessed.

The proposed visit of the King of Siam to the United States of America will be remembered by many, and also how suddenly that visit was postponed. A great sorrow fell upon him in the accidental death by drowning of his queen and infant daughter in the river Chow Payah in May, 1880. There was mourning in the palace and sympathy throughout the kingdom. The royal remains were kept till March of the following year, when they were disposed of by grand cremation ceremonies, which were more elaborate and expensive than any ever before known in Siam, costing, it is said, a half million dollars or more.

The main features of these cremations in high life are essentially the same from generation to generation, because everything is ordered to be done "according to the ancient royal custom." The remains were embalmed and placed in a sitting posture in urns prepared expressly for the purpose—the inner one of copper, the outer of gold, each having openings through which the air could circulate and liquids escape. In time bodies thus exposed become perfectly dry. The liquids are caught in large brass basins and carried off in procession from time to time, and burned with incense and fragrant woods. The ashes are then rolled into balls, and borne with great ceremony to the river bank before a

Soon the sound of slow and plaintive music was heard; the band came in sight, preceded by an ensign-bearer. He was supported on either side by tassel-bearers. All were dressed in deep mourning, even the drum was draped in black. This band was followed by three companies of soldiers. The officers had broad bands of black crape on the sleeve. The soldiers wore black coats and white trousers. All were barefoot, and stepped slowly and solemnly. These were followed by many companies in black suits, with red trimmings, white hats, and light-colored leather pouches. The royal body-guard formed a hollow square about the royal pavilion, and protected all avenues of access to the king. A second band approached, dressed in black, with yellow lacings and tufts in their hats. They were followed by companies in black, with red trimmings and white hats, all bearing their arms reversed. These armed companies were forty minutes in passing, and represented the military.

His Royal Highness Somdet Cholfah Bhanurangsi Swang Wongse now made his appearance, and took his place with his foreign guests. He was clad entirely in black. A band, dressed in white, now led the naval force of the kingdom, which consisted of many companies of sailors, all in white, except their black badges. These were followed by civilians, Siamese ministers, and other high state officials, in white coats, with gold sashes and a crape badge. Their breasts were adorned with resplendent orders, foreign and Siamese. This part of the pageant was fifteen minutes in passing.

An artificial rhinoceros and lines of men, representing celestial beings, known as *Tawadaks* or Buddhist angels, with conical white hats, having one horn like the unicorn, now filled the streets. Both beast and angels were carrying small gilt houses, filled with presents for the priests. There were native soldiers in the style of old Siam, holding

flags and streamers of all shapes and colors; others wearing coats of grotesque designs, and bearing poles, to which were attached long white and yellow cloths, also for the priests. Others wore red caps and jackets, and were drawing carts, on which were placed pretty little gilded houses, full of presents.

Minute guns were now being fired, indicating that the urned remains of the queen and her daughter, a princess of the highest possible grade, were being removed from their temporary resting-place at Wat Poh, to be conveyed to the gorgeous cremation building. They were preceded by piles upon piles of priests' robes, borne upon men's shoulders, four men to each gilt palanquin. On each side of the street were all sorts of imaginary beasts, partly human, and bearing the same burdens of merit-making gifts for Buddhist priests. Some of these creatures were horrible, and had faces of many colors. After these imps came another band of Buddhist angels (*Tawadahs*), with their white horned caps, each one holding a trident, the tips of whose prongs were all crowned with white lotus lilies. Next a band of drummers, dressed in red, and each one striking his drum with a mournful cadence as he marched. They were followed by more *Tawadahs* in white; then came bands of instrumental music, and bearers of the sacred five and seven storied umbrellas, called *chats*, signs of approaching royalty.

The head-priest's elaborately gilt and spired car, drawn by men and horses, approached, surrounded by gold umbrellas. Its windows and door were hung with golden curtains. The chief-priest, the king's uncle, sat in state, with open palm-leaf book before him, but passed by in silence, followed by a train of Siamese mourners in white, and with closely-shaven heads. The second car was drawn by six horses and forty men. The standard and umbrella bearers were dressed in green. A very near relative of the