Siam and Laos

as seen by our

American Missionaries

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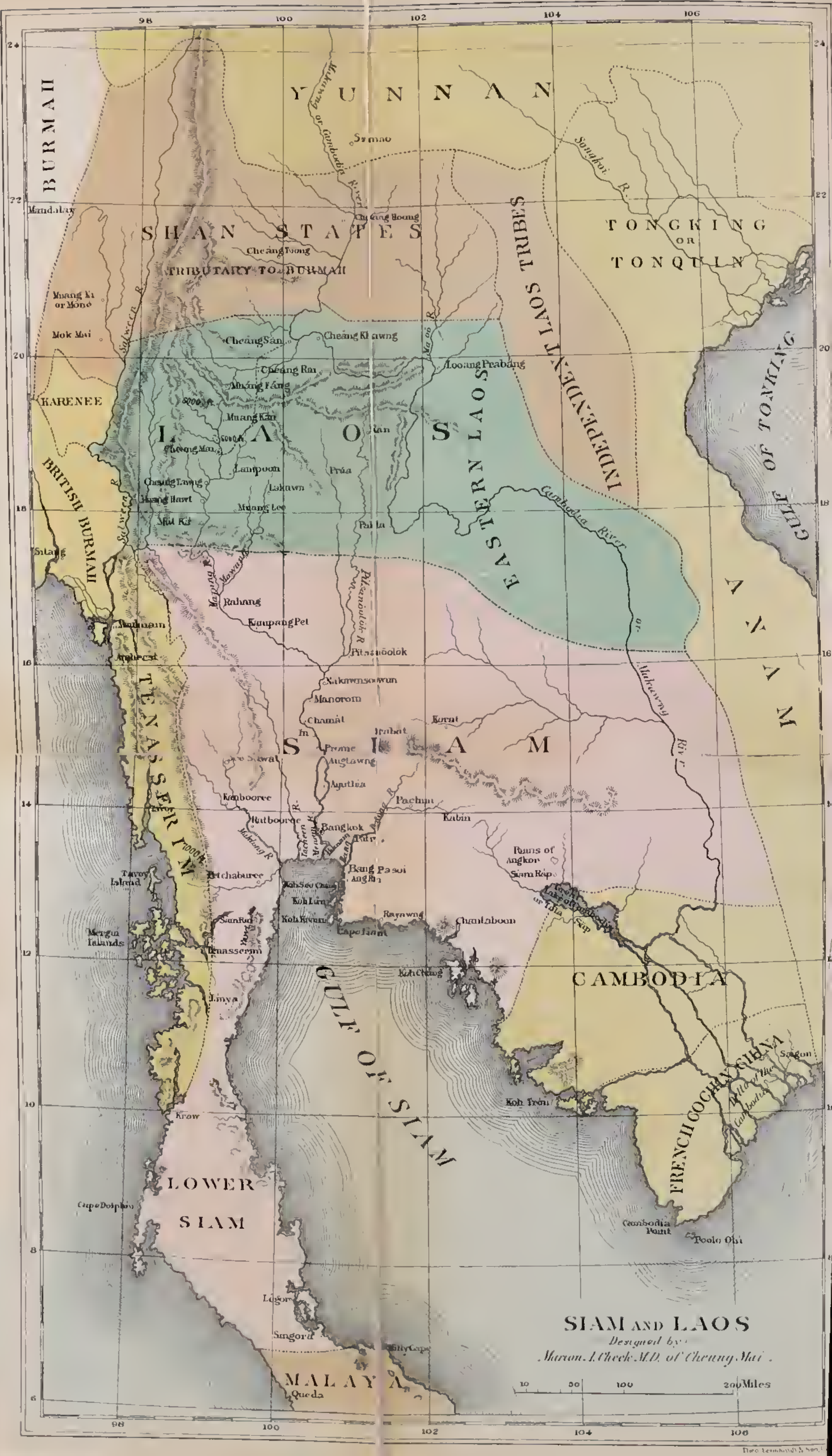
SIAM AND LAOS
Designed by
Marion A. Cheek M.D. of Cheung Mai.
10 50 100 200 Miles
BURMAH
YUNNAN
SHAN STATES
TRIBUTARY TO BURMAH
INDEPENDENT LAOS TRIBES
TONGKING OR TONQUIN
GULF OF TONKING
LAOS
EASTERN LAOS
KARENEE
BRITISH BURMAH
TENASSERIM
SIAM
ANNAM
CAMBODIA
FRENCH COCHIN CHINA
GULF OF SIAM
LOWER SIAM
MALAYA
Mandalay
Muang Ki or Mone
Mok Mai
Ssumao
Cheang Hoong
Cheang Toong
Cheang Sän
Cheang Klawng
Cheang Rai
Muang Fang
Muang Kan
Cheang Mai
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Kampang Pet
Pitsanoolok
Nakawnsawun
Manorom
Chamat
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Prome
Anglawng
Ayuthia
Kamboorce
Ratbooree
Bangkok
Paknam
Pachim
Kabin
Bang Pasoi
Angkin
Ruins of Angkor
Siam Rap
Lake of Cambodia or Tali Sap
Petchaburee
Koh Sea Chang
Koh Lan
Koh Krom
Cape Liant
Rayawng
Chantaboon
Koh Chang
Koh Tron
Sam Roi
Tenasserim
Tavoy Island
Mergui Islands
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Quilly Cap
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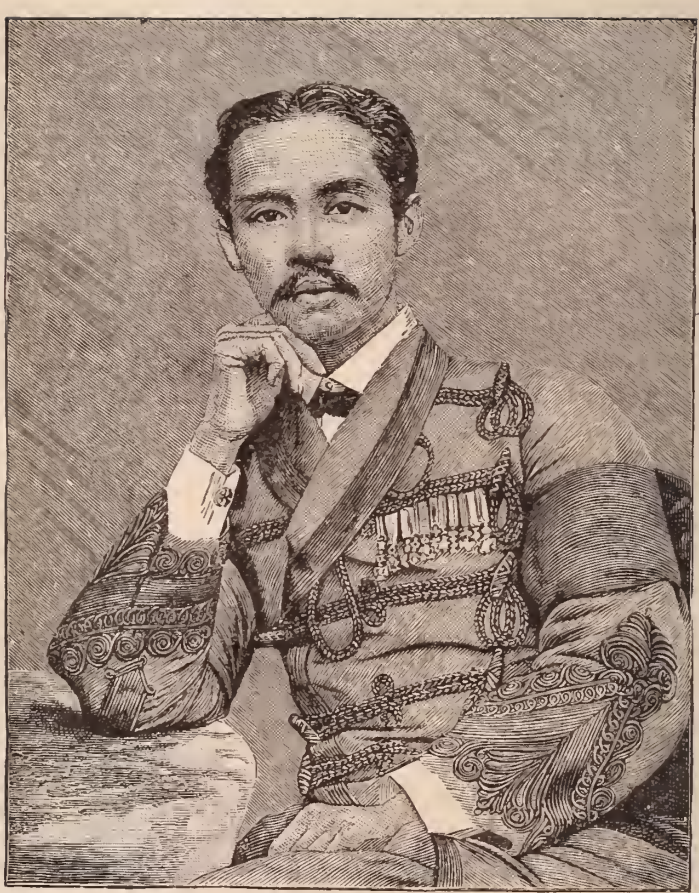

HIS SUPREME MAJESTY, CHULALANGKORN I., KING OF SIAM.

Frontispiece.

SIAM AND LAOS,

AS SEEN BY

OUR AMERICAN MISSIONARIES.

"Siam has not been disciplined by English and French guns, like China, but the country has been opened by missionaries."—*Remark of His Grace the late Ex-Regent of Siam.*

FULLY ILLUSTRATED.

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PREFACE.

THIS volume is a response to calls for information on Siam and Laos. A score of missionaries have contributed chapters. Some have written amidst conflicting claims of the crowded field-life; others, during brief visits to the homeland; several are children of missionaries and were born in Indo-China; others are noble pioneer workers, whose long years of service abroad are now ended. A few of the chapters originally appeared in a missionary periodical. Two of the writers have "entered into rest." The editor is much indebted also to the standard works of Pallegoix, Bowring, Crawford, Mouhot and several more recent travelers, to geographical papers and official reports, and to valuable original data furnished by Dr. House, Dr. Cheek and others.

Adaptation and necessary condensation of the information thus gathered make special credit often impossible, but doubtful points have been verified by reference to competent authority, so far as practicable.

The contributions of our missionaries have special value. For years they have been brought into close contact with the people in their homes, schools, wats and markets, mingling as honored guests in social gatherings and at official ceremonials, enjoying full opportunity of studying the natives at work, at play and at worship. As teachers, physicians, translators and trusted counselors they are recognized as public benefactors by the king and many high officials. Siam owes the introduction of printing, European literature, vaccination, modern medical practice, surgery and many useful mechanical appliances to our American missionaries. They have stimulated philosophical inquiry, paved the way for foreign intercourse with civilized nations, given a great shock to the grosser forms of idolatry among the more enlightened, leavened the social and intellectual ideas of the "Young Siam" party, and, almost imperceptibly, but steadily, undermined the old hopeless Buddhist theories with the regenerating force of gospel truth.

The young king publicly testified on a late occasion: "The American missionaries have lived in Siam a long time; they have been noble men and women, and have put their hearts into teaching the people, old and young, that which is good, and also various arts beneficial to my kingdom and people. Long may they live, and never may they leave us!"

May this volume aid in arousing a more intelligent and generous interest in this field—the sacred trust of our American Presbyterian Church; may it promote a truer sense of the heroic sacrifices, the patient and multiplied labors, of the noble band who for the past half century have toiled and waited in hope for the spiritual regeneration of the Siamese and Laos!

SCHENECTADY, May, 1884.

N. B. Uniformity in the spelling of Siamese and Laos proper names is not yet attainable. Different ears catch the foreign sounds and transliterate them differently, giving an endless variation. Thus the single city which we give as Cheung Mai, following Dr. Cheek, may be found in books and maps as Cheng Mai, Cheang Mai, Zimma, Chang Mai, etc. To ascertain the pronunciation in such cases, see what one pronunciation can be made to cover all of these spellings. It is hoped that the present volume is a step in the direction of a correct transliteration of Siamese names.

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SIAM AND LAOS.

PART I.

SIAM.

CHAPTER I.

THE INDO-CHINESE PENINSULA.

WHEN about to visit a foreign country the prudent traveler is careful to seek in guide-books and from maps some data in regard to its position, prominent features and relation to adjacent regions. Such information adds interest to each stage of his journey. Climbing a mountain, he overlooks two kingdoms. Such a valley opens into a rich mining district; the highlanders of that range are descendants of the original lords of the soil; the navigability of this river is of commercial importance as a possible trade-route.

In like manner, bold outlines of the whole peninsula furnish the best introduction to a careful study of Central Indo-China, showing the trade-connection of Northern Laos with Burmah and the richest mining province of China, and the relation of Siamese progress to certain Asiatic commercial problems. New views also are thus gained of the great work actually accomplished by our American misssonaries for science and civilization in this corner of the globe during their self-imposed exile of half a century.

Indo-China is the south-east corner of Asia, a sharply-defined, two-pronged peninsula outjutting from China just below the Tropic of Cancer, its long Malayan arm almost touching the equator, bounded east, south and west by water. Southward, the Eastern Archipelago stretches toward Australia, "a kind of Giants' Causeway by means of which a mythological Titan might have crossed from one continent to another."

Along the north the extreme south-west angle of the Celestial Empire, by name Yunnan, lies in immediate contact with the Burmese, the Laos and the Tonquinese frontiers, whence the main rivers of the peninsula divide their streams.

YUNNAN may be regarded as a lower terrace projecting from the giant Thibetan plateau—an extensive, uneven table-land, separated for the most part by mountains from contiguous regions. The northern portion is a confused tangle of lofty ranges, with peaks rising above the snow-line, and few inhabited valleys—a region, in a word, compared to which Switzerland is an easy plain—of wild romantic scenery, ravines, torrents and landslips, but with little industry or commerce. Maize is used for food throughout the sparsely-populated district, since rice cannot be cultivated at such altitudes. The main ranges have a north-and-south trend, subsiding some thousand feet before reaching the Indo-Chinese frontier. Parallel to the lower south and south-east chains of mountains are a series of rich upland valleys, each basin supplied with its own watercourse or lake, and tenanted more or less densely by the busy villages situated near the water. Rice, pepper and the poppy are extensively cultivated.

The choicest portion of this province lies within the open angle formed by the divergence of four large rivers—viz. "the Yangtse, taking its course due north, till, bending to the east, it makes its final exit into the Chinese Sea at Shanghai; the Mekong, pursuing a tortuous course south to the China Sea near Saigon; the Si-Kiang, originating near the capital of the province, flows due east to Canton; while a fourth, the Songkoi, or 'Red River,' goes south-east to Hanoi and the Gulf of Tonquin. A central position amidst such mighty waterways and with so wide a circumference of outside communication indicates the great importance of the district either for administration or trade—a fact early appreciated by the sagacity of the Chinese, who as far back as the third century established fortified colonies among the then savage and recalcitrant tribes of Yunnan. For export Yunnan has three capital products to offer—opium, tea and metals. The opium-yielding poppy grows almost everywhere. The celebrated tea of the south-east is in great request, being considered by the Chinese themselves superior to all other qualities of tea throughout the empire. Its cultivation offers no difficulties, the high price it commands outside of the region being solely due to the costliness of transport. But it is the metal-trade which will in all probability be the prominent feature of commerce. The great tin-mines have supplied the whole of China from time immemorial; copper abounds throughout the province; lead, gold, silver, iron, and last, but not least, coal, make up the list. Curiously enough, the vast Chinese empire includes no other truly metalliferous province except the bordering region of Western Ssu-ch'nan, geologically, though not administratively, a part of Yunnan; nothing but the inaccessibility, and too-often disturbed and lawless condition, of the country has thus far hindered its mines from becoming sources of really incalculable wealth to the province, to the Chinese empire at large, and, by participation, to foreign commerce."

The affluent circumstances of the peasantry in the southern districts are in marked contrast with those of the north. The women do not compress their feet. Many of the men bear the Muslim's physique and features. Indeed, before the merciless massacre of the Panthays, Mohammedans formed the majority of the population. But the last quarrel, begun by miners in 1855, only ended in 1874 by wellnigh the extermination of the entire Muslim community. Mounted expresses were despatched to seventy-two districts with instructions to the principal mandarins from the governor of the province. Families were surprised and butchered by night, their homes sacked and mosques burned. A cry of horror ran from village to village. The Mohammedans rushed to arms, collecting in vast numbers, and upward of a million Chinese were killed in revenge. In the end the Panthays were crushed out, but more than one-fourth of the inhabitants of Yunnan had perished or emigrated. Plague and famine followed the great rebellion and fearfully devastated the whole region, which is only now slowly recovering its former prosperity.

The aboriginal inhabitants of Yunnan are apparently of the same stock as the Laos, just across the border. The variety of their clans and picturesque costumes recalls the wild Highlanders of Scotland.

The chief lack of Yunnan is good roads. Going east or west, the highways run up the ridge, over the saddle or watershed, and dip down into another valley, and this up-and-down process must be repeated from town to town; ravines must be crossed, torrents must be bridged, and often the narrow causeway lies along the side of a precipice or the ascent may be some hundred feet up the face of a mountain. Merchandise crossing the Laos frontier must be carried long distances at an enormous cost. Thus the celebrated so-called Puekr tea of North-eastern Laos, just a little south of the Yunnan border, while freely used by the peasantry of that province, is too expensive by the time it reaches the nearest Chinese port to export to Russia or Europe. Yet the amount of goods and produce that move to and fro *viâ* Szmao, the last Chinese administration town, to Laos, and *viâ* Cheung Mai to Burmah, is surprising,—thus affording the best possible guarantee for an increased amount to follow were only communication facilitated. Railroad communication for an overland route is warmly advocated. "From Yunnan," as Baron Richthoren puts it, "the elongated ridges of the Indo-Chinese peninsula (the land of the Burmese, Malays, Siamese, Laos and Cochin-Chinese) stretch southward as fingers from the palms of a hand."

The configuration of the peninsula is easily remembered as separated by longitudinal belts of hills, spurs from the northern ranges, into principal basins, or funnels, for the rich drainage of the surrounding highlands, *viâ* Burmah, or the basin of the Irawaddy; the valley of the Menam and that of the Cambodia or Mekong

River; and Tonquin, connected by a narrow coast-strip with the French delta.

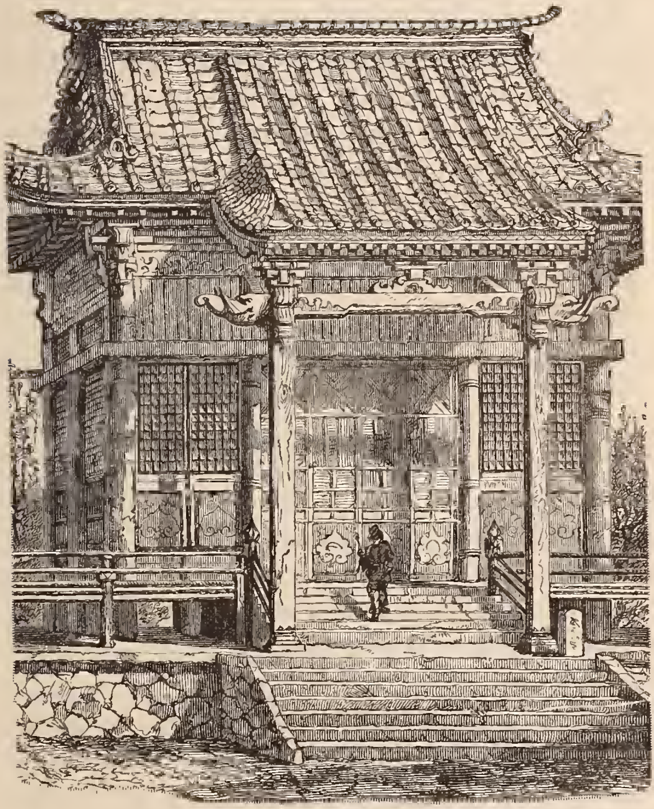
The fluvial system of each of these great valleys is dominated by one important river, whose downward course is more or less impeded by cataracts, until the upper plateaux gradually subside into undulating tracts, which increase in width and levelness as they approach the several deltas. Throughout Indo-China these waterways, with their intersecting streams and canals, are the main highways of population, commerce and travel. Native villages often consist of one long water-street running through a perfect jungle of palms and other tropical trees, the little bamboo huts and the wats nearly hidden in the foliage. Boats are used instead of carts, carriages or cars. In the upland districts buffaloes and elephants are used; but, with the exception of the pack-peddlers and caravans at certain seasons, the traveler off the waterways would rarely meet any trace of human life.

I. THE FIRST BASIN—BURMAH.

The westernmost basin embraces the kingdom of Ava, ruled by a most cruel native autocrat, and the three British provinces of Lower Burmah, governed by a chief commissioner residing at Rangoon and subject to the viceroy of India at Calcutta.

What is known of Burmah is chiefly embraced in the valley of the Irawaddy. This large stream, rising in Thibet, flows almost due south some twelve hundred miles, receiving tributaries east and west, and communicating by numerous branches with the Salween, running parallel on the east, but almost useless for travel, owing to its rapids.

The Burmese delta (a network of intercommunicating waters from the Indian border-ranges to the banks of the Salween near the Siamese frontier) has some fourteen outlets, but most of these are obstructed by sandbars and coral-reefs. Bassein and Rangoon are the seagoing ports. The latter is a large city of over one hundred thousand inhabitants, and now ranks third in commercial importance in the Indian empire. This plain from the coast to Prome is subject to periodical inundations and is exceedingly productive. It is a great rice-district. Below the northern frontier of British Burmah the Irawaddy is nearly three miles broad. In the neighborhood of Prome the face of the country changes. Ranges of lofty mountains approach nearer and nearer, and finally close in on the stream, the banks becoming precipitous and the valley narrowing to three-quarters of a mile. Above the latitude of Ava the whole region is intersected by mountains, and not far from Mandalay, the capital of Upper Burmah, is their lowest defile. The banks at this point are cov-



BURMESE TEMPLE.

ered with dense vegetation and slope down to the water's edge. Still ascending the river, before reaching Bhamo one enters an exceedingly picturesque defile, the stream winding in perfect stillness under high bare rocks rising sheer out of the water. The current of the upper defile above Bhamo is very rapid, and the return waters occasion violent eddies. When the water is at its lowest no bottom is found even at forty fathoms.

For centuries the Irawaddy has furnished the sole means of communication between the seaboard and interior. The Irawaddy Flotilla Company, started in 1868, employs over one thousand hands, and sends twice each week magnificent iron-clad steamers with large flats attached to Mandalay. The time-distance between the two capitals is greater than from New York to Liverpool. Smaller vessels go on to Bhamo. The native craft are estimated at eight thousand. The rapid increase of trade along this river attracts colonists and has greatly enriched British Burmah.

Bhamo, on the left bank, near the confluence of the Taping and close to valuable coal-mines, is within a few miles of the Chinese frontier. The old trade-route noted by Marco Polo is still in use, but the ranges to be crossed, the great cost of land-carriage, together with the dangerous neighborhood of the Kachyen banditti, render the road of limited avail for trade-purposes beyond the fertile Taping valley. The China Inland Mission and the American Baptists have stations at Bhamo.

The Rangoon-Prome railroad was opened in 1878. The Rangoon-Toungoo line will be in use this year, following the Sittang valley to the borders of Siam. British capitalists have now under contemplation a road crossing from Maulmain to Cheung Mai, a distance of about one hundred and sixty miles, with only one comparatively low hill-chain east of the Salween River. A terminus at Cheung Mai would create an increased traffic, leading to a further extension *viâ* Kiang Kung to Szmao on the Yunnanese frontier, a distance roughly estimated at two hundred and forty miles, with no intervening mountain-system. Although as yet untraveled by European exploration, this track is in use by the native caravans, and the projected railroad will open a most important exchange market with millions of well-to-do, industrious inhabitants, occupying some of the richest mining and agricultural districts of Southern Asia.

The official census report of Burmah states: "There is possibly no country in the world whose inhabitants are more varied in race, customs and language. There are said to be as many as forty-seven different tribes in the narrow boundaries of the two Burmahs, but these may be classed under four—Peguans, Burmese, Karens and Shans or Laos. The Peguans seem to have first occupied the country. The Burmese followed, and took possession of the plains and valleys of Upper and Lower Burmah. Their language is used in the English courts of justice, and is probably destined to be the prevailing language of the country. The Laos, occupying the north-eastern plateaux skirting the Chinese border, are from a great trunk of uncertain root which appears to have been derived originally from Yunnan, where the main stem still retains its primitive designation of La'o—a name commonly exchanged for 'Shan' in the language of the modern Burmese and English writers. The Karens, scattered along the Siamese frontiers, are various tribes having their own customs, dialects and religion. They have a tradition that when they left Central Asia they were accompanied by a younger brother, who traveled faster, went directly east and founded the Chinese empire. Before the British acquired Lower Burmah these simple mountaineers were subjected to brutal persecutions. So late as 1851 the Burmese viceroy told Mr. Kincaid that he 'would instantly shoot the first Karens he found that could read.'"

The Karens live among the vast forests, now in one and anon in another valley, clearing a little patch for rice-fields and gardens, their upland rice and cotton furnishing food and clothing and the mountain-streams fish in abundance. They seldom remain more than two seasons in one spot, and all through the jungles are found abandoned Karen hamlets, where rank weeds and young bamboo-shoots supplant the cultivated fields.

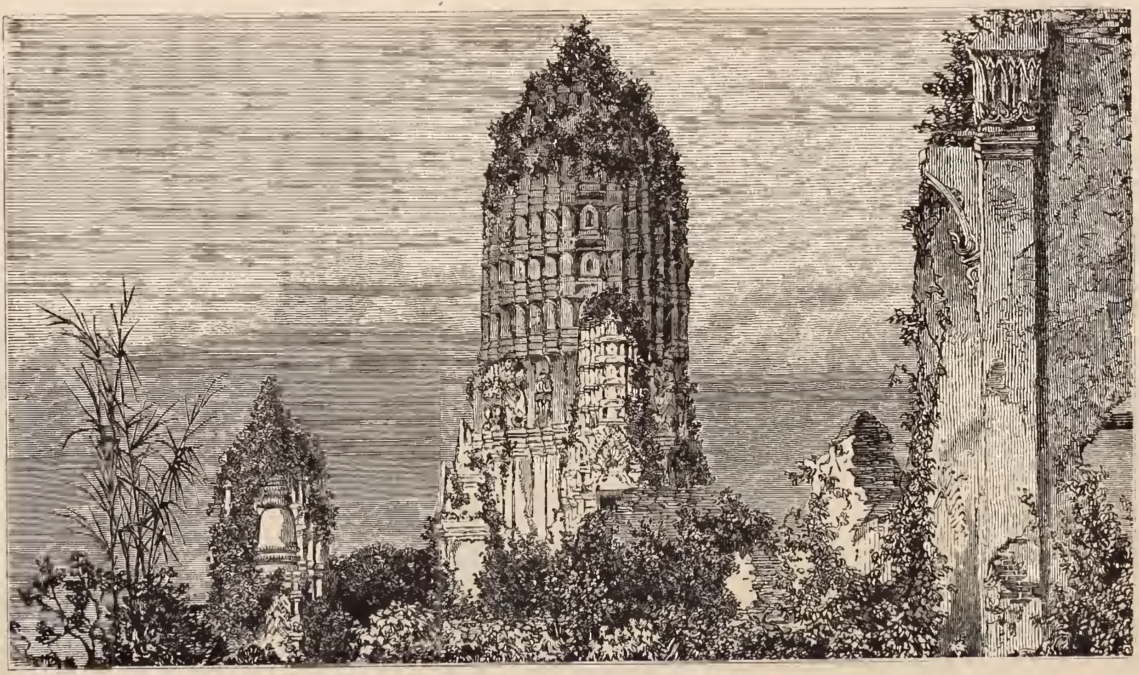
II. THE SECOND BASIN—SIAM.

The river Menam (or Meinam) is formed by the union of streams from the north. About halfway in its course mountains close upon the river, which passes from the upper plateaux of Laos into the valley of Siam proper through some of the finest mountain-scenery in the world.

The rich alluvial plain of Siam is estimated at about four hundred and fifty miles in length by fifty miles average breadth. The main stream, above Rahany, is known as the Maping. Below the rocky defiles the river divides several times, and contains some larger and smaller islands; Ayuthia is built on one of the latter. The founding of this city, about 1350 A. D., was one of the most memorable events in Siamese history. In 1766 the Burmese depopulated the country and burned Ayuthia. A new dynasty, with Bangkok for the capital, was founded about a century ago.

Bangkok, sometimes called "the Venice of the Orient," is the Siamese metropolis—the first city in size, wealth and political importance. Old Bangkok is changing rapidly. European fashions and architecture are introduced among the nobility and wealthy. The new palace is a mixture of European architectural styles, retaining the characteristic Siamese roof. The furniture is on a most costly scale, having been imported from England, it is stated, at an expense of some seventy-five thousand pounds. The large library is filled with books in several languages and furnished with all the leading European and American periodicals. The royal guards are in European uniform, but barefooted, only the officers being permitted to wear boots. In the surrounding area are courts and rows of two-storied white buildings, the barracks, mint, museum and pavilions. The entrance to the throne-room is up a fine marble staircase lined with ferns, palms and plants. The throne-room is a long hall hung with fine oil paintings and adorned with costly busts of famous personages. The spacious drawing-room adjoining is furnished in the most luxurious European style.

The palace of the second king (named George Washington by his father, who was a great admirer of our celebrated American statesman) is also European in many of its appointments, with mirrors, pictures and English and French furniture. This prince, still in the prime of middle life, devotes a great part of his time to scientific



RUINS OF A PAGODA AT AYUTHIA.

pursuits, and has collected in his palace much machinery, including a small steam-engine built by himself. He is fond of entertaining European guests in European style; his reception-room is brilliantly illuminated with innumerable little cocoanut-oil lamps.

The Krung Charoon, or main highway of Bangkok, is several miles in length, and used by the nobility and foreigners for driving, except during the high tide of the river, when it is often partly under water. The liveliest quarters in the capital are those mainly occupied by the Chinese, with their eating-houses, pawnbrokers' and drug-shops and the ubiquitous gambling establishments, and with a Chinese *waiang*, or theatre, near by.

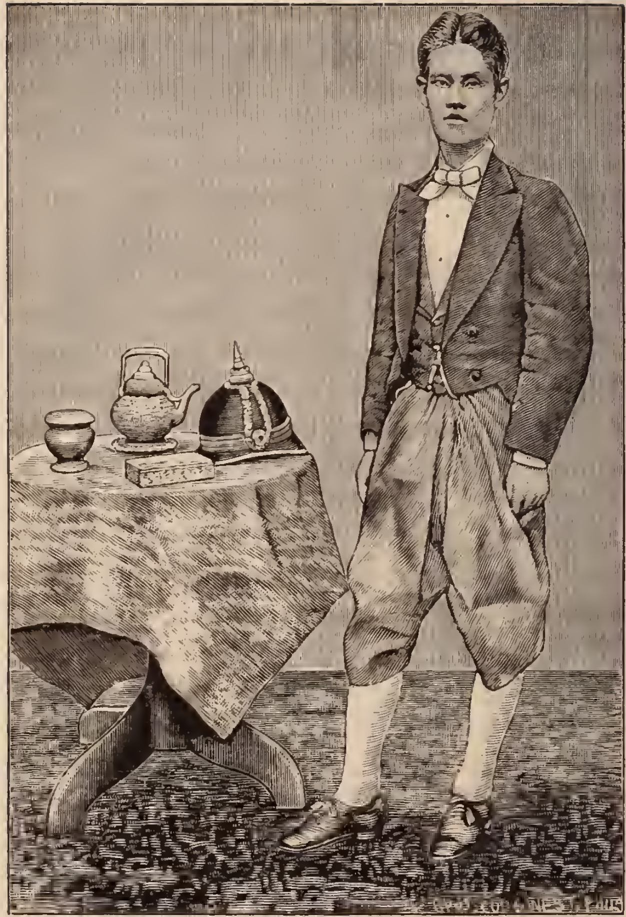
The finest view of the city and its surroundings is from the summit of Wat Sikhet.

The summer palace recently erected by His Majesty, a few miles below Ayuthia, is a large building in semi-European style, standing amid lovely parks and gardens, ornamented with fountains and statuary, with streams spanned by bridges, and a fine lake with an island on which is built a most delightful Siamese summer-house. The royal wat (temple) opposite this palace is a pure Gothic building fitted with regular pews and a handsome stained-glass window.

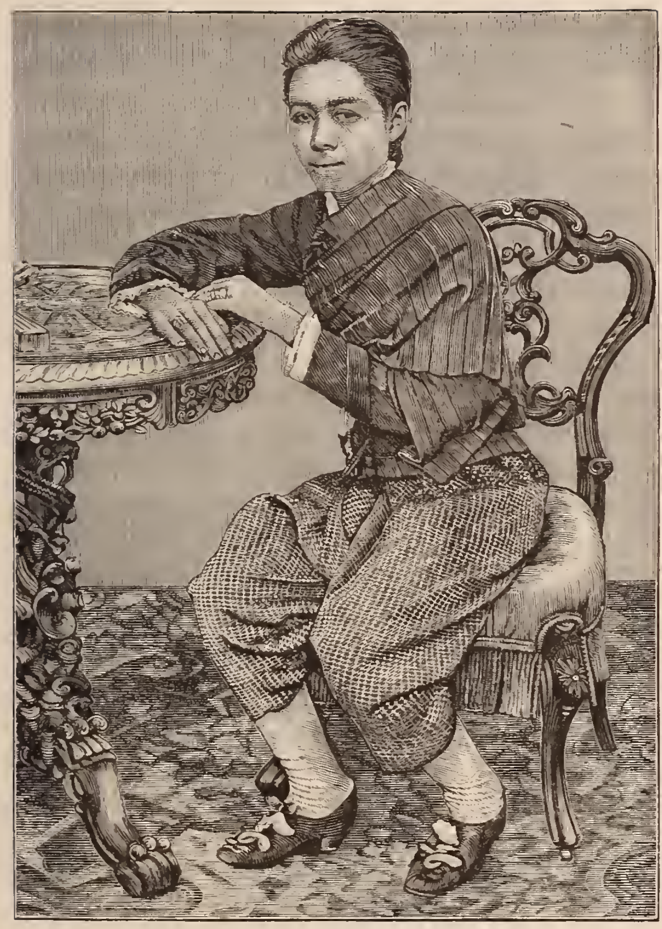
"There are a few houses in Bangkok, occupied by the 'upper ten,' built of stone and brick, but those of the middle classes are of wood, while the habitations of the poor are constructed of light bamboos and roofed with leaves of the atap palm. Fires are frequent, and from the combustible character of the erections hundreds of habitations are often destroyed. But in a few days the mischief is generally repaired, for on such occasions friends and neighbors lend a willing hand."

Some of the entertainments of the nobility are in the European style. Miss Coffman describes one given to the foreign residents by the Kromatah, or minister of foreign affairs, to celebrate the birthday of the young king: "The city was illuminated. We left home about eight and returned at eleven P. M. In front of the house was latticework with an archway brilliantly illuminated. A strip of brussels carpet was laid from the archway to the steps. The house was elegantly furnished in foreign style. In the reception-room were three flower-stands, the centre one of silver and the other two glass, each having little fountains playing. The sofas and chairs were cushioned with blue silk. An excellent band discoursed harmonious music, and on the arrival of His Majesty a salute was fired."

The dress and habits of the court-circles have undergone an entire revolution within the last few years. The men wear neat linen, collar and cravat; an English dress-coat, with the native



SIAMESE GENTLEMAN IN MODERN COURT-DRESS.



SIAMESE LADY IN MODERN COURT-DRESS.

p'anoong arranged much like knickerbockers; shoes and stockings. The court-dress of a Siamese lady consists of a neat, closely-fitting jacket, finished at throat and wrists with frills of white muslin and lace, and a p'anoong similar to that worn by the men. The artistic arrangement of the scarf is a matter of much importance. Before a new one is worn the plaits are carefully laid and the shawl placed in a damp cloth and pounded with a mallet till it is dry. This fixes the folds so that they last as long as the fabric, and also gives a pretty gloss to the goods. Since the introduction of the jacket, instead of the many chains they wear valuable belts of woven gold with jeweled buckles, and instead of a number of rings on every finger, fewer and more valuable gems.

It is difficult for a stranger to distinguish a woman of the lower classes from a man, as in dress, manner, appearance and occupation they seem so much alike. The streets, the market-places and the temples are crowded with women. Housekeeping and needlework form so small a part of female labor here that much opportunity is given for out-of-door work.

John Chinaman too is everywhere in Bangkok, and at the floating Chinese eating-shops or little boats a simple meal of rice, curry and fish can be had for a few cents.

The king's garden is thrown open once a week to the public, and an excellent native band plays for several hours.

Progress marks the condition of things in Bangkok. The young king is one of the most advanced sovereigns of Eastern Asia. He has made a study of the laws and institutions of Western civilization, and has a manly ambition to make the most of his country. All foreigners who meet him speak well of him. He is bright, amiable and courteous in his personal intercourse, and devotes much time to state business, assisted by his brother and private secretary, usually called Prince Devan, who, though young, has the reputation of being a keen, thoughtful statesman. A younger brother is at present being educated at Oxford. The king is a little over thirty, slight in figure, erect, with fine eyes and fair complexion for a Siamese. He was born on the 22d of September, 1853, and came to the throne when only fifteen years of age.

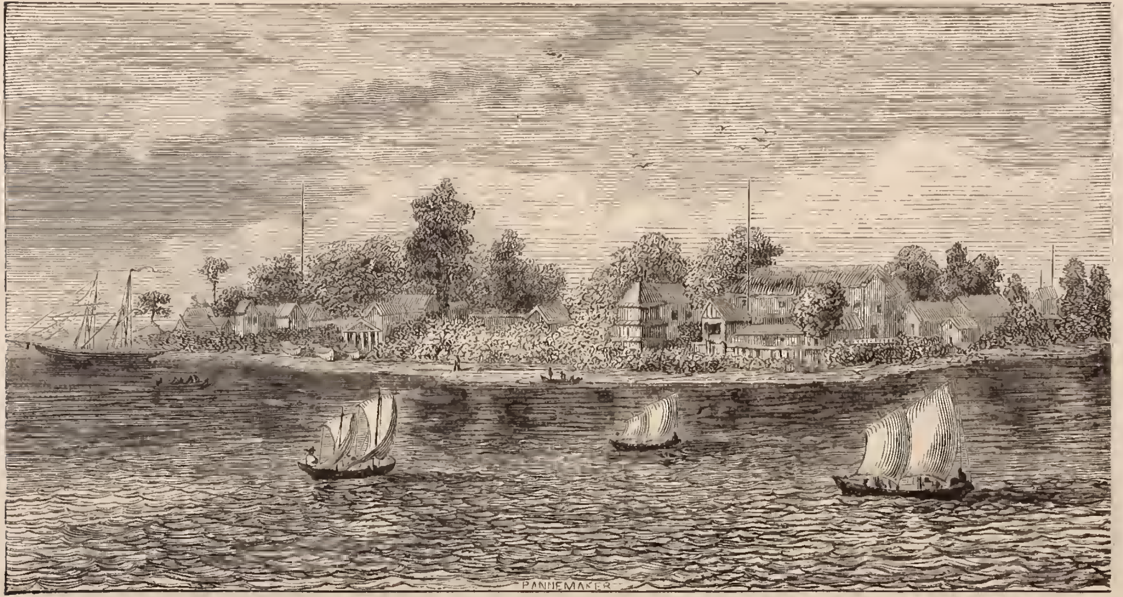
Paknam is situated near the entrance of the eastern mouth, an extensive mud-flat obliging the largest vessels to find anchorage on the open roadstead at the head of the gulf. Five miles above Paknam is Paklatlang, the entrance of the canal which shortens one-half the distance by river from Bangkok. This canal, however, is only available for small boats. A carriage-road runs from Bangkok to Paknam, some twenty-five miles, and here is the custom-house and port of

Bangkok. The last division of the Menam occurs below Bangkok, and the river finally disgorges itself by three mouths into the gulf.

Two rivers from the west fall into the middle and westernmost mouths—the Sachen, with its towns and villages, sugar-plantations and mills scattered all along its elegant flexions, connecting by canals with the Menam east and the Meklong west; and the Meklong, an independent stream from the Karen country, flowing through a narrow but extremely fertile valley in which hills and plains of some extent alternate. The capital of the province is situated at the junction of the canal—a town of twenty to thirty thousand inhabitants, noted as the birthplace of the Siamese Twins.

The "Sam-ra-yot," or Three Hundred Peaks, separate Siam from Burmah. This chain consists of a series of bold conical hills, extremely ragged on their flanks and covered with immense teak-forests stretching hundreds of miles over mountains and valleys. The noted pass of the Three Pagodas across this range follows a branch known as the Meklong Nee to the last Karen town on the Siamese frontier, thence on foot or elephants across the summit to the head-waters of the Ataran, and by canoes, shooting the rapids, a somewhat abrupt descent, to Maulmein.

Petchaburee, on the western side of the gulf, near the foot of this range, is a sanitarium for


PANNEMAKER

VIEW OF PAKNAM ON THE MENAM.

natives and Europeans. Here is the Presbyterian mission compound, and on the summit of a neighboring hill is the king's summer palace. The Tavoy road leads through this town. The Laotian captives who built the royal palace are settled in villages all over the Petchaburee valley; "their bamboo huts with tent-like roofs, thatched with long dried grass, rise from the expanse of level plain among fruit and palm trees like green islands in the sea." Each hut has its well-tilled kitchen-garden, its tobacco- and cotton-plot. The latter, dyed with vegetable and mineral substances, the women weave on their own looms for family use. With the exception of a few Chinese articles, everything about these hamlets is of native make. The Laotian serfs are superior to the Siamese physically, and have more force of character.

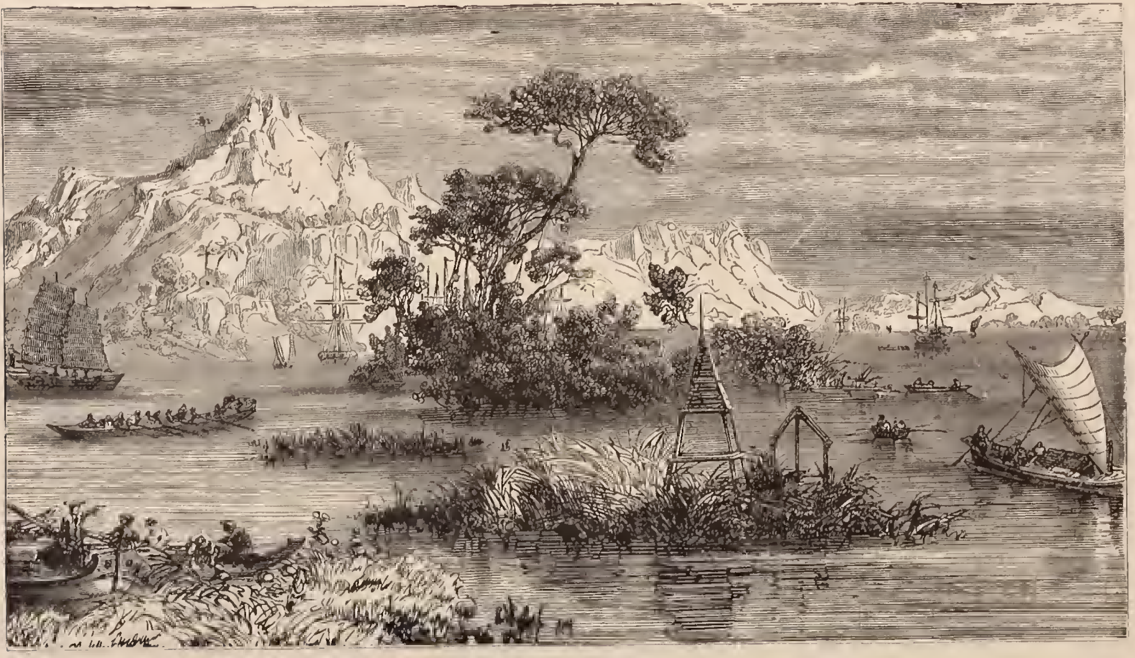
The Malay peninsula projects from the Isthmus of Kraw (lat. 10° N.), six or seven hundred miles to Cape Romania, opposite Singapore. If the estuaries between the Pakshan and Chomphon Rivers are ever united by a ship-canal, the peninsula would be put where it ethnically and geographically belongs, as one of the islands of the Eastern Archipelago.

Much of the peninsula is still one of the unexplored portions of the globe. The rich stanniferous granite of the rocky spine running from Kraw Point to the alluvial plain at the south is probably the most extensive storehouse of tin in the world. Across the mountains there are scarcely anywhere beaten tracks, and the natural passes between the coasts are mostly overgrown with jungles. Numerous hot springs and frequent earthquakes attest the presence of active igneous forces. Coal has been recently discovered near Kraw Point. Gold and silver are associated with the tin, and iron abounds in the south.

Apart from the Chinese immigrants, who here, as elsewhere, monopolize trade, the inhabitants may be classed under three heads—the full-blooded Siamese of the North; the Samsams, or mixed Malay and Siamese population; and the southern Malays, subdivided into the rude aborigines, who inhabit the wooded uplands of Malacca, and the more cultivated Mohammedan Malays, who under the influence, first of the Hindoos and then of the Arabs, have developed a national life and culture and formed states in various parts of the Archipelago. They are migratory in their habits, and perhaps come next to the Chinese as sailors and traders and in the spirit of adventure. Like most followers of the False Prophet, they are devoutly attached to their faith, though in all other respects they readily accommodate themselves to the social usages of the Siamese and Chinese. They wear turbans and loose trousers and carry a bent poignard. Though not a quarrelsome race, when excited they become reckless and ferocious. For a long time this Malay race was classed as an independent division of mankind, but is now considered as affiliated with the Mongol stock, closely resembling the Siamese. The Malayan tongue, with its simple structure and easy acquirement, is a valuable instrument of communication throughout the whole of Farther India.

The Bang Pakong, thirty miles east of Paknam, has its sources in the Cambodian Mountains and drains a highly-productive country. Sugar and rice are extensively cultivated along its banks. Bang Pasoi, its port, has a considerable trade with the interior. A delightful view of the surrounding country may be enjoyed from a small mountain south of the town. To the west are extensive salt-works, the sea being let into large flats enclosed by embankments and left to evaporate with the heat of the sun. Cart-roads lead off to the neighboring villages, to Anghin, and thence to Chantaboon, five or six days' journey. Buffaloes are used here for carts, and there are also some riding horses and elephants.

Anghin is a little village frequented by foreigners for a few weeks in February or March for surf-bathing. A sanitarium was erected there some years ago, and the following adver-



PORT OF CHANTABOON.

tisement appeared in the Bangkok newspaper, August 29, 1868:

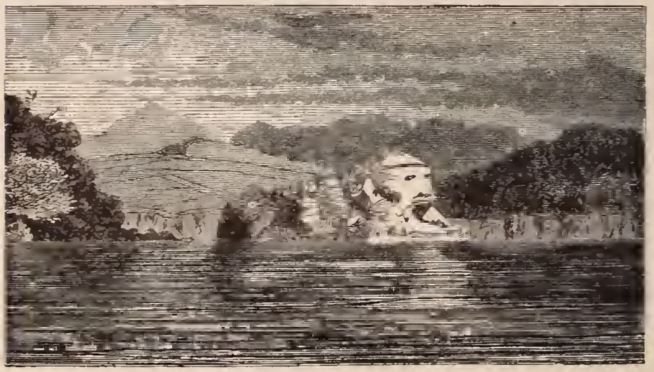
"His Excellency Ahon Phya Bhibakrwongs Maha Kosa Dhipude, the Phra Klang, Minister of Foreign Affairs, has built a sanitarium at Anghin for the benefit of the public. It is for the benefit of the Siamese, Europeans or Americans to go and occupy when unwell to restore their health. All are cordially invited to go there for a suitable length of time and be happy, but are requested not to remain month after month and year after year, and regard it as a place without an owner. To regard it in this way cannot be allowed, for it is public property, and others should go and stop there also."

The eastern coast of the gulf is lined with numerous hills, and a little way out in the gulf are islands, many of them extremely precipitous and wild and romantic in appearance. Chantaboon, the most eastern Siamese province on the gulf, is one of the most fertile and populous districts. The government regards it as of much importance, and has fortified it at great expense.

The plain is irrigated by a network of short streams. The coast west of the bay is mountainous, and a projecting arm guards the entrance. The river near its mouth is perfectly clear, while the Menam is muddy. Ten miles inland of the coast the Sah Bap hills extend some thirty miles. Bishop Pallegoix says that in an hour or two's wandering through these mountains his party collected a handful of precious stones. Gems are more abundant on the frontiers of the Xong tribes, at the north-east corner of the gulf, where the mountains form an almost circular barrier and the wild highlanders are accused of poisoning the frontier wells to keep off strangers. Ship-timber abounds near Chantaboon, and building after European models is prosecuted with vigor at the government dockyards. The chief town is situated some miles inland, near Sah Bap, where the windings of the little streams, the high forest-clad mountains, give a varied and picturesque aspect, and the climate, owing to the mixture of sea- and mountain-air, is more propitious than at Bangkok.

The famous Lion Rock, a mass of rudely-shaped stone which stands like the extremity of a cape near this port, is held in great veneration by the natives. "From a distance," says M. Mouhot, "it so resembles a lion that it is difficult to believe that nature unassisted formed this singular colossus. Siamese verse records an affecting complaint against the cruelty of the Western barbarian—an English captain, whose offer to purchase had been refused, having pitilessly fired all his guns at the poor animal."

The small tributary kingdom of Korat, northeast of Bangkok, can only be reached through an extensive malarious jungle called, on account of its fatal character, "Dong Phya Phai," the Forest of the King of Fire. All sorts of wild tales and legends are told of perils from robbers, wild beasts and malarious sickness—supposed to be the curse of evil spirits inflicted on those hardy enough to venture into this lion's den. Dr. House was the first white man who ever visited Korat, in 1853, while engaged in an extensive missionary tour through the Cambodian valley, and M. Mouhot came several years later. But the whole province is little more than a nest of robbers, largely made up of vagrants, escaped prisoners and slaves. Nine miles east of Korat, the principal town, is a remarkable



LION ROCK, AT THE ENTRANCE OF THE PORT OF CHANTABOON.

ruin of the same general style as the Cambodian ruins of Siamrap.

CAMBODIAN RUINS OF SIAMRAP.

In Eastern Siam, about fifteen miles north of the great lake of Cambodia, are some of the most extraordinary architectural relics of the world.

A trip of several hundred miles through a land where salas bare of furniture are the only inns makes it advisable to carry our own bedding, lay in supplies and provide a cook before leaving Bangkok. A Cambodian servant to act as guide and interpreter is also needed.

A canal-trip due east from Bangkok brings us to the Kabin branch of the Bang Pakong River. Mr. Thomson describes this as "a romantically beautiful little stream, where we seemed to have retired to a region unknown to men, inhabited only by the lower order of animals. Monkeys walked leisurely beside the banks or followed us with merry chattering along the overhanging boughs, while tall wading-birds with tufted heads and snow-white plumage and rose-tipped wings paused in the business of peering for fish to gaze with grave dignity upon the unfamiliar intruders. Some were so near that we could have struck them down with our oars, but to avoid this outrage they marched with a calm and stately stride into the thickets of the adjoining jungle."

Kabin is the entrepôt of trade with the far interior. Chinese merchants here waylay the elephant-trains from Battabong and Laos, exchanging salt and Chinese or European wares for horns, hides, silk, oil and cardamoms. Mines near Kabin are said to furnish the most ductile gold in the world.

Leaving our boats, elephants and a buffalo-cart are engaged. We step from the veranda of the hut perched on poles to the elephant's head and into the howdah. The driver sits astride his neck, guiding when needful with an iron-pointed staff. A military road from Kabin leads to the borders of Cochin-China. Sesupon, the first Cambodian town, on the frontier of provinces wrested by Siam from Cambodia a century ago, is first reached. Some of the people, including the Siamese governor and officials, speak both languages.

It is possibly harvest-time; in the fields the reapers are among their crops. Some of the plains are covered with tall grass ten feet high. There are perhaps burnt patches or a spark has just started a fire, and the flames, swept on by the wind, are roaring, crackling and sending up dense columns of smoke in their wake. As we pass under the overarching branches of trees in the forest our elephant keeps an eye the while ahead, and when some lower limb would strike the howdah he halts, raises his trunk and breaks it off. We toil up and over the watershed and down a steep bank to the river's brink through the tall grass and bamboos, our beast sometimes sliding on his haunches, then bracing and feeling the way with his trunk, or plunging into the soft ooze of the river, wading through water so deep that nothing but the howdah and elephant's head and trunk appear above the surface, and then climbing with slow but sure steps up a bank at least forty-five degrees steep.

Overtaken at night away from a town, we encamp under the trees. Our attendants make an enclosure with the cart and branches of trees, placing the cattle inside. We cook and eat our evening meal, making a great fire and boiling the coffee and rice over the bright coals. Our bivouac is underneath the stars on branches piled high above the malarious surface of the ground. The natives watch in turn, keeping up the fire to drive off wild beasts. Elephants prowl in droves outside the enclosure and cries of jackals disturb our dreams. Possibly in the morning tiger-tracks are pointed out to us.

On the higher waters of the Sesupon River, running south to the lake, are the first traces of the ancient Cambodian civilization in the shape of a ruined shrine buried beneath overgrown jungle; other ruins are found in more than forty different localities up to the confines of China.

Diverging to the north-east, evening finds us sheltered in a sala near the quaint old town of Panomsok. To the north are the first altitudes of the upland steppes of Laos. After such toilsome days and nights of exposure, crossing some sunny eminences and ancient stone bridges, we finally reach Siamrap, situated on a small stream about ten miles from the head of Thalay Sap.

It is a walled city, the teakwood gates thickly studded with large iron nails, the gateways surmounted by curious pointed towers. Houses similar to those of the middle class in Bangkok, the court-house and governor's residence, are the only substantial buildings. Extensive, straggling suburbs extend southward for several miles on either bank of the river. The province has from eight to ten thousand inhabitants, all Cambodians. Dr. McFarland reports: "We found but two or three persons who understood the Siamese language. The governor was a rather intelligent young Cambodian who had been educated at Bangkok, and of course spoke Siamese. He was pleasant, affable and very fond of foreigners."

The communication with Panompen, the Cambodian capital, is by boat down the river and crossing to the lower end of the lake, then by the river which connects the lake with the Mekong. From Siamrap to Panompen requires six days by boat.

Half a dozen miles north of Siamrap, in the midst of a lonely forest, we come upon the celebrated ruins of Nagkon Thom, or Angkor the Great, and Nagkon Wat, the City of Monasteries, is a few miles off. The city ruins to-day are little more than piles of stone among the jungles. The outer wall, built of immense volcanic rocks, is best preserved. The natives say an entire day is necessary to circumambulate the walls. A mutilated statue of the traditional leper king is seated on a stone platform near the gate of the inner wall, protected by a grass thatch. The pedestal has an ancient inscription on stone. The ruins are in the charge of a provincial officer, who lives in a lodge near the palace. There are some old towers still standing.

Some thirty miles distant are the Richi Mountains, said to contain the quarries from which the supply of stone was obtained. A broad causeway, still in serviceable repair, leads to the foot of these hills. Mr. Thomson tried to go there, but the thick jungle made it impossible to penetrate to the quarries even on elephants, although the officer who accompanied him made a series of offerings at several ruined shrines in order to propitiate the malignant spirits supposed to infest these wilds.

Concerning Angkor the Great ancient tradition speaks in most extravagant terms, as being of "great extent, with miles of royal treasure-houses, thousands of war-elephants, millions of foot-soldiers and innumerable tributary princes."

A road through the forest connects this once royal city with Nagkon Wat. Along this road a side-path leads to an observatory, overgrown with shrubs and vines, standing on a terraced hill and commanding a wide view of the surrounding region.

The main entrance approaches the wat on the west, crossing by an immense stone causeway over a deep, wide moat and under a lofty gateway guarded by colossal stone lions hewn, pedestal and all, from a single block. The structure rises in three quadrangular tiers, of thirty feet, one above the other, facing the four points of the compass, on a cruciform platform. Out of the highest central point springs a great tower one hundred and eighty feet high, and four inferior corner-towers rise around. It has been suggested that Mount Menu, the centre of the Buddhist universe, with its sacred rock-circles, is symbolized, the three platforms representing earth, water and wind. Flights of steep stairways, each step a single block and some having fifty or sixty steps, lead from terrace to terrace. Long galleries with stone floors, stone roofs, and walls having a surface smooth as polished marble, covered with elaborately chiseled bas-reliefs, are flanked by rows of monolithic pillars whose girth and height rival noble oaks. The centre compartments are walled in, and the remaining two-thirds of the space consists of open colonnades. The inner walls of these open galleries have blank windows; seven stone bars, uniform in size and beautifully carved with the sacred lotus, form a sort of balcony to each window.

The bas-reliefs have thousands of nearly life-size figures, representing scenes from the great Indian epic Ramayana—battle-scenes, processions of warriors, and the struggle of the angels with the giants for the possession of Phaya Naght, the snake god. The majority of these are executed with care and skill, and form one of the chief attractions of the wat. Specimens of the more beautiful, and also casts of the inscriptions, have been transported to the Cambodian Museum of Paris, but, unfortunately, M. Mohl, the celebrated Orientalist entrusted with the task of deciphering these unknown characters, died before reaching any satisfactory conclusion. Scholars seem inclined to regard the inscriptions as derived rather from the Pali or Sanskrit than the Malay or Chinese language.

Mr. Thomson, the English traveler, with his photographs, has best introduced these wonderful ruins to English readers. Mr. Frank Vincent's very readable account of his visit to these ruins in company with Dr. McFarland, in 1871, also gives us much valuable information and reproduces some of the English photographs. Dr. McFarland states that "this wonderful structure covers an area of over ten acres—that the space enclosed within the temple-grounds is two hundred and eight acres, and the space within the walls of the city is over two thousand acres. The temple is built entirely of stone. These stones were brought a distance of about thirty miles, and must have required the labor of thousands of men for many years. There is no such thing as mortar or cement used in the building, and yet the stones are so closely fitted as in some places to appear without seam. These ruins, together with the beautiful little lakes that dot the plain and the remnants of splendid roads that once traversed the country, show that those formerly inhabiting this valley were a powerful race."

And as we in turn ponder and gaze on these evidences of an unknown civilization a spell falls upon our imagination. We seem to see these forsaken altars thronged by devotees, and through the valley are busy cities adorned with stately palaces, astir with the human life of a powerful, opulent kingdom. But vainly do we conjecture how ruins of such solidity, so stupendous in scale, of elaborate design and excellent execution, could have lain forgotten through centuries in this lonely forest-district of an almost unknown portion of the globe; nor can the sloth and ignorance of the present semi-civilized inhabitants offer any trustworthy solution of the problem. They reply, "We cannot tell," "They made themselves," "The giants built them," or refer to a vague local tradition of an Egyptian king, turned into a leper for an act of sacrilege, as the reputed founder of the wat.

The present good condition of the ruins of Nagkon Wat is largely due to the late king of Siam, who gave them in charge of the small religious brotherhood now living in little huts under the very shadow of the gray walls.

Travelers describe Nagkon Wat as "a rival of Solomon's temple" and "grander than anything left us by Greece or Rome," "occupying a larger space than the ruins of Karnac," "imposing as Thebes or Memphis, and more mysterious."

But the credit of what might be called the rediscovery of these wonderful remains amidst the forest solitudes of Siamrap is due to M. Mouhot, after these remnants of a lost past had for ages been forgotten by all the world outside of their immediate vicinity. The innumerable idols and thousands of bats hanging from the ceilings would seem to have held undisturbed possession for centuries.

Fergusson's opinion, that this shrine was devoted to the worship of the snake god (see *Tree and Serpent Worship*), is not in accord with the views of Garnier, Thomson and others, who agree that it must have been erected in honor of Buddha. Dr. Bastian, president of the Berlin Geographical Society, thinks, with Bishop Pallegoix, that the probable date of the building—at least its commencement—was the grand event from which the civil era of Siam dates—viz. the introduction of the sacred Buddhist canon from Ceylon in the seventh century. The general appearance of the worn stairways, and the dilapidated condition of the city, slowly mouldering under the destructive encroachments of a tropical jungle, would seem to indicate great age. Yet the mediæval narrative of Cambodian travel by a Chinese officer, late in the thirteenth century, recently translated by M. Remusat, contains no allusion to this great temple, which has induced some to conclude that the building belongs to a later period. In 1570 A. D. a Portuguese refugee from Japan refers to these "ruins" and the inscriptions thereon as being in "an unknown tongue."

III. THE THIRD BASIN—VALLEY OF THE MEKONG.

The hill-country which separates the valley of Siam from that of the Mekong (or Mekaung)—known in its lower course as the Cambodian River—is of moderate elevation and the boundary-lines not well defined.

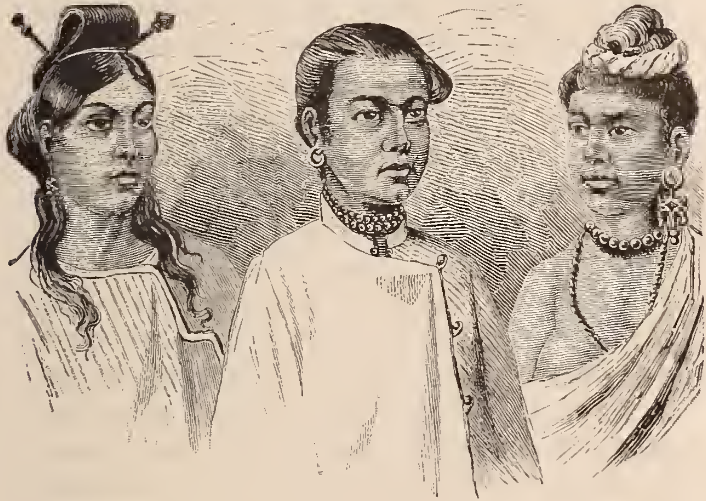
The Mekong is one of the most remarkable streams of Asia. It rises in Thibet, passes through Western Yunnan parallel with the Yangtse and Salween, till, breaking through the mountains not far from each other, the Yangtse flows across

China and the Salween to the Bay of Bengal, while the Mekong, crossing Laos and Cambodia, after a somewhat devious course of at least two thousand miles reaches the Cochin-China delta.

The broken character of the Laos country gives the Mekong in its rapid descent from plateau to plateau during its upper course the velocity of a mountain-torrent as it tears along, with a noise like the roaring of the sea, through deep gorges overshadowed by rocky defiles. In Upper Laos the river is from six to eight hundred feet wide, and has in the dry season an average depth of twenty feet, while the banks are some twenty-five feet above the water, the difference between the ordinary height and flood-mark being very great. The rainy season begins in April with the melting snow; the water rises gradually from that time to July or August, when the country is flooded.

It was at Garnier's suggestion that the great French commission of exploration was sent up this river through Laos and Yunnan to Thibet, 1866–68. Garnier being considered too young, the chief command was entrusted to Captain Doudart Lagrée. De Carné (the brilliant journalist of the *Deux Mondes*) formed a third, and an armed escort accompanied them. The pluck and resolute endurance of this gallant band of Frenchmen, who during two years of exposure and hardships toiled over some five thousand miles of a country almost unknown to Europeans, command our admiration. Garnier took nearly all the observations, and shortly after the death of Lagrée assumed command and conducted the expedition safely to its close. De Carné describes the Mekong as "an impassable river, broken at least thrice by furious cataracts, and having a current against which nothing can navigate." M. Mouhot, the pioneer of European explorers in this valley, says that his boatmen sometimes sought fire at night where they had cooked their rice in the morning. He went as far as Looang Prabang, the north-eastern Laos province tributary to Siam, where he died. Here the channel is very wide and lake-like in its windings through a sort of circular upland valley some nine miles in diameter and shut in by mountains north and south, reminding one of the beautiful lake-scenery of Como and Geneva. "If it were not for the blaze of a tropical sun, or if the noonday heat were even tempered by a breeze, this Laos town would be a little paradise," is one of the latest entries in Mouhot's journal.

If there is almost an excess of grandeur in the upper courses of the Mekong, the general aspect of the scenery as it reaches the comparatively low level of Siam and Cambodia is sombre rather than gay, though there is something imposing in the rapidity of so large a volume of water. Few boats are to be seen, and the banks are almost barren on account of the undermining of the forests, trees constantly falling with a crash into the stream. For some two hundred miles from its mouth the river is nearly three miles wide, and is studded with islands, several of which are eight or nine miles long and more than a mile broad. The discovery of the impracticability of the Mekong for inland communication with Laos and China has robbed the French delta of much of its supposed value.


Cambodia. Anam. Laos.

TYPES OF WOMEN OF FARTHER INDIA.

The bulk of the Laos tribes are spread over the north-eastern valley of the Mekong, from 21° to 13° north latitude. This extensive region is a sort of *terra incognita,* reported to be thickly settled except along the regions contiguous to the Tonquin Mountains, where the villages are exposed to sudden raids from the wild tribes known as "inhabitants of the heights," who sometimes strike hands with the Chinese refugees in making a foray over the border, carrying off the peasants as slaves and driving away cattle, with whatever in the shape of plunder can be moved. The caravans of pack-traders from Ssumao on the Yunnan frontier bring back large loads of the celebrated *so-called* Puekr tea and cotton; whence it is inferred this plain must be fertile and extensively cultivated.

Talā Sap (Sweet-water Lake), the great lake of Cambodia, forms a sort of back-water to the river Mekong, with which its lower end connects by the Udong. It belongs partly to Siam and partly to Cambodia. It is one of those sheets of water called in Bengal *jhéts*—viz. a shallow depression in an alluvial plain, retaining part of the annual overflow throughout the entire year, hence subject to great variations of extent and depth. In the dry season the average depth is four feet, and the highest floods entirely submerge even the forests on its banks. It takes about five days to traverse the lake when full.

Extensive fishing-villages, erected on piles, stud the lake, reminding Mr. Thomson of "the pre-historic lake-dwellings of Switzerland." The houses are above a bamboo platform common to the entire settlement and used for drying fish. This lake is an object of superstitious veneration to the natives, the fish furnishing them with the most important source of their livelihood. Enormous quantities are exported, dried or alive in cages, while immense supplies are furnished to Anamese villages to be boiled down into oil, thus giving lucrative employment to thousands.

The small remnant of the ancient kingdom of Cambodia forms a rough parallelogram, consisting in large part of an alluvial plain lying athwart the Mekong, uncomfortably wedged in between Siam, Anam and the French delta, with a very short west coast-line.

It would appear from Chinese annals that at an early period the Cambodians were an exceedingly warlike race, and that their authority extended over many of the Laos and even Siam. But for centuries Cambodian influence in Indo-China has been on the decline. It has little more than the name of an independent government at present, being under a joint protectorate of Siam and France, and tributary to both.

The Cambodians differ from the Siamese in language, but in habits and religion resemble them, with the usual Indo-Chinese type of government. There are Roman Catholic, but no Protestant, missionaries in Cambodia or Cochin-China, though several years ago strong reasons were urged for the establishment by the American Presbyterian Mission of an out-station at one of the principal Cambodian towns.

Panompen, the present capital, is connected by a small steamer, which makes regular trips, with Saigon. Below Panompen the river divides into two streams, which flow south about fifteen miles apart, and empty themselves into the China Sea. There is a labyrinth of intersecting branches, creeks and canals across the delta, and the low shores are mostly grown wild with jungle.

Saigon, on an offshoot narrow, tortuous, but navigable for vessels of the heaviest tonnage, is situated about twenty-five miles inland. The French governor resides here, and is assisted in the control of the province by a legislative and executive council. Extensive parks surround the palace; macadamized roads run through the city. There is a public promenade along the river, and botanical gardens, where foreign plants have been introduced with the intent of their propagation. The spacious harbor with its floating dock contains a fleet of iron-clad steamers, and flags of the different consulates are floating from the line of mercantile and government offices along the bank. Telegraph lines connect Saigon with all parts of the peninsula, and submarine cables with the outside world.

IV. THE FOURTH BASIN—TONQUIN.

Tonquin, the north-east corner of Indo-China, is a province of Anam. It is separated by mountains from Laos and Siam and also from the Chinese empire. The Songkoi, or Red River, dominates the whole fluvial system, several streams from the north and west uniting, and then dividing and diverging, so as to form a triangle or delta. Upon these streams are situated the important towns. This Tonquinese river connects Yunnan with the sea, forming an important trade-route. Its port is Hanoi, at some little distance up the river, just as Bangkok is in regard to the Menam. For the acquirement and control of this waterway French enterprise seems to have taken the satirical counsel of Horace, "Si possis recte; si non, quocunque modo."

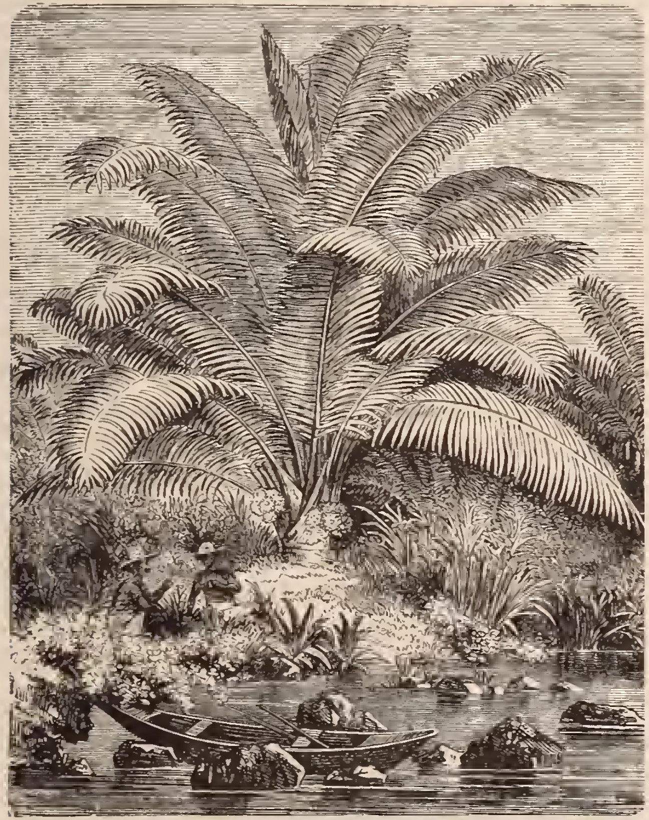
The French colonial government covers an empire in Indo-China similar to that of Great Britain in India, and would like to annex not only Anam, but Cambodia and Eastern Siam. Early in this century, at the instigation of Roman Catholic missionaries, who have played an important part in the political complications, the French assisted Gialong, an Anamese aspirant to the throne, making their services the basis of a treaty which virtually gave them the protectorate of the whole eastern coast. This claim, being disputed by the successors of the prince, was the pretext for further encroachments. The court of Hué, too weak to resist, again and again memorialized the Chinese government, and each time a strong protest was made by China, who naturally objected to a foreign power holding the trade-keys of some of her richest provinces. These remonstrances have been ignored, and the frank statement of Dr. Hammand, the French civil commissioner in Tonquin, is not calculated to commend Christian ethics to the Buddhists of Southern Asia. "When a European nation," he affirms, "comes in contact with a barbarous people, and has begun to spread around its civilizing influences, there comes a time when it becomes *ipso facto* a necessity to extend its boundaries. There is no country more favorable to our development than the kingdom of Anam. The Anamese recognize that we are incontestably their superiors. *It is necessary to force Anam to accept our rule.*" This has been done.

An able writer in the *London Quarterly* (October, 1883) says: "The railroad route from Maulmein across the Chino-Shan frontier being assured, an upland cross-road of some seventy or eighty miles north-east would lead to Yuan-Kiang on the main stream of the Songkoi, whence a road would lie open to the capital, Yunnan-fu, or south to the mart of Manhao, which is the head wharf of the Songkoi River navigation within the province of Yunnan, and thence to the Gulf of Tonquin. . . . Siam, the Laos provinces tributary and independent, Yunnan and Tonquin can thus be brought into the closest and most profitable connection with Burmah, all on one line, at once the easiest and most expeditious across the peninsula, and thus a short direct line for goods-transit be provided from the Gulf of Tonquin to the Bay of Bengal. . . . This, then, is the answer to the riddle of the Sphinx of the Far East, this the true solution of the Indo-Chinese overland route problem; by this the long-sought goal will be obtained, and the highest benefits conferred, not on Burmah and Yunnan only, but on India and China; on Siam and the Laos country, and Tonquin; on British and European enterprise throughout the China Sea and Indian Ocean alike—the vision of Marco Polo and his gallant successors realized."

This northern province is more closely connected with China in government, literature and sympathy than with the rest of Anam. The Tonquinese use the Chinese characters for the written language, and near the frontier the Anamese tongue is hardly spoken; their laws and customs are modeled on those of China; the internal trade is in Chinese hands; the merchant quarter of Hanoi, with its shops and well-paved streets, is purely Chinese; the external trade-centre is at Hong Kong. Chinamen marry the women of the country, and all around the fringe of the delta Chinese and half-breeds form the dominant race. It is even hard to say just where Tonquin ends and China begins, for there is a belt of debatable land along the frontier, narrow in the north, but widening to over one hundred miles in the hills, and in some of the border fortresses Chinese and Anamese exercise joint control.

This plateau country, along the upper banks of the Songkoi and Claire Rivers, is infested by wild native tribes and Chinese brigands under the names of "Yellow Flags" and "Black Flags," who erect barriers along the streams, so that travel in these parts is dangerous. Hence the importance of the fortified towns of Sontay and Bacninh, situated close to these outlaw districts. From Sontay to Hanoi there is a well-made embankment, shaded by fine trees. It was along this road that Garnier and Revière met their deaths in 1873. Most of the travel is along the river. Throughout the province almost the only highways are footpaths across the jungles. From Hanoi roads lead north to China and south to Hué. The influence of Hanoi, through Anam, is widespread as a centre of fashion as well as of authority. A French writer calls it the "Paris of the Anamese empire." What more could he say?

The thickly-populated delta, intersected by streams and tidal creeks, is subjected to periodical inundations, when the whole face of the country has the appearance of an enormous lake, with here and there clumps of trees, villages and pagodas. Away from the delta only the valleys and lower slopes are cultivated, and the rest of the province is a tangle of mountains covered with dense forests, of which little is known,



SCENE ON AN ORIENTAL RIVER.

apart from the Songkoi and minor waterways, unless from the reports of the natives or Roman Catholic missionaries. The population of the province is estimated not to exceed ten millions, probably less. The Anamese differ from those of the south, the race being formed by a union of the hill-aborigines with the seaboard people. The climate is not considered favorable for Europeans. There are no Protestant missions in Anam.

This survey of the principal basins of Indo-China will enable the reader to appreciate how largely the agricultural wealth and commercial importance of all these countries depend on its rivers. It is scarcely exaggeration to state that a few inches of water often determine whether the receding flood at the annual inundation will leave a bright, grain-laden plain or a sterile waste of ruined crops. It should also be remembered that while periodical floods are common to all the deltas, each valley has its own period, indicating that the table-lands in which the rivers have their sources are at unequal distances. Moreover, travel throughout the peninsula being so largely aquatic, not only north and south along the main trunks, but across the same valley by means of intersecting canals, tide plays an important part in these waterway trips, and many smaller streams being filled and emptied daily, a careful study of tidal influences will avoid delay, as at times the water, suddenly receding, leaves a boat stranded on the banks of some creek for hours, with no water even for cooking or drinking purposes.

V. CLIMATE, PLANTS AND ANIMALS.

Far India, as this south-eastern corner of Asia is sometimes called, has a tropical climate. At seasons the heat is intense, but in many portions the warm air is genial and not unhealthy, though Europeans need from time to time a change to a more bracing region. The seasons are two—the wet and the dry: the former embraces our spring and summer months, and ranges from May to October; the latter, the remainder of the year. March and April are the hottest months; November, December and January, the coolest. The winter is mild and summer-like—doors and windows all open and no fire. Houses are built without window-glass, and the shutters are seldom closed except at night or to keep out the sun. Here, too, is the verdure of perpetual summer—lands where the foliage is always green, where roses bloom from the first to the last day of the year, and the orchards are always laden with their luscious store—lands of Italian sunsets, picturesque mountains, loveliest valleys, and long stretches of comparatively still waters, said to resemble the Swiss mountain-lakes, clear as crystal, reflecting the sky and great mountain-shadows, and filled with fish; the grandest caves, the richest mines of precious metals and valuable gems. Rice, the principal article of food among the natives, grows almost spontaneously, and is used on the table at an expense of three cents a pound, while bananas are sold for two cents a dozen and oranges for half a cent each.

It does not cost much to build a little bamboo house after the native fashion. For example, Miss Cort paid for one of her schoolhouses at Petchaburee, fourteen by twenty-two feet, only $6.38 for the materials, including a lock and key; $5.44 for the wages of the men and women who built it—making the entire cost $11.82. But then we should think it a very queer schoolhouse, with its basket-like walls of woven bamboo, its roof of leaves sewed together, its three little windows without any glass, and two doors; nor would its strangeness be less striking if we saw the native teacher and children all sitting on the floor. But things move slowly in these warm Eastern countries. If you want to build a more substantial house, you must begin by buying earth to make the bricks, and oftentimes rough logs to be worked up into boards; and, though labor is cheap, a day's work in Indo-China will not mean anything like as much accomplished as in the same space of time in America.

In the useful arts the inhabitants of this peninsula are far behind Chinese and Hindoos, though there are said to be ingenious workers in copper and iron, and in the manufacture of gold and silver vessels they display considerable skill.

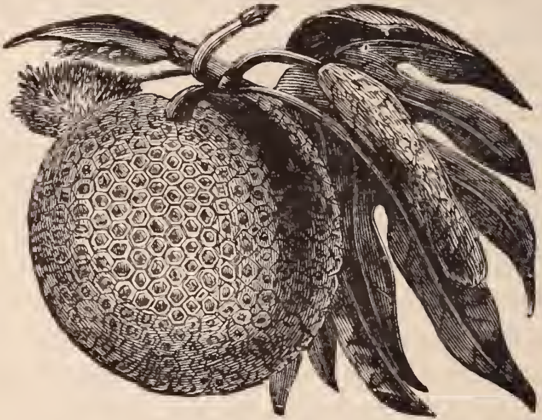
Agriculture is the main employment of the natives. In many parts of this peninsula the land is prepared by turning in the buffaloes during the rainy season to trample down weeds and stir the soil, which is afterward harrowed by a coarse rake or thorny shrub, the stubble being burnt and the ash worked in as manure.

But the Chinese are everywhere introducing improved methods. The best quality of rice is transplanted, the plants lying partially covered in the still pools of water between the rectangular ridges marked off for the purpose of irrigation; and rice growing above the rising water looks very like a field of wheat or tall grass. At high-flood seasons it is a pretty sight to see the planters moving about in boats attending to their crops. The growth is almost spontaneous. Little care is needed until the whole family must turn out to drive off the immense flocks of little rice-birds. The rice is sown in June, transplanted in September and harvested late in December or in January. In the fields at this season may be seen the reapers, multitudes of sheaves and stacks of grain. The rice is generally threshed by buffaloes, a hard circle being formed around each stack. The carts have large wheels, four or five feet apart, with the sheaves placed in a small rack. The driver guides the oxen by means of ropes fastened in the septum of their noses, reminding one of the Scripture, "I will put my hook in his nose."

Sugar is produced almost everywhere, in Siam especially, under the Chinese settlers, its quality yielding to that of no other sugar in the world, so that it is fast becoming one of the most important Siamese exports. Almost all the spices used throughout the world find their early home in the peninsula or the neighboring islands—the laurel-leaf clove; the nutmeg, like a pear tree in size, its nut wrapped in crimson mace and encased in a shell; the cardamom, a plant valuable for its seeds and the principal ingredient in curries and compound spices. A pepper-plantation is a curious sight, the berries growing, not in pods, but hanging down in bunches like currants from a climber trained much like a hop-vine, yielding two annual and very profitable crops. Tea is cultivated in the Laos provinces, and coffee and cotton are also raised. Tobacco is largely grown, and its use is almost universal; even babies in their mothers' arms are often seen puffing a cigar. A fine aromatic powder, made from the deep golden root of the curcuma, is sold by the boatload in Bangkok; Siamese mothers may be seen in the morning *yellowing* their children with it for beauty. It is also used to give color to curries, and mixed with quicklime makes the bright pink paste wrapped in seri-leaf around the betel-nut for chewing purposes.

Vegetable-gardens and fruit-orchards surround most of the villages. The neat Chinese gardens near Bangkok are worth a visit. The land is made sufficiently dry by throwing it up in large beds ten to twelve feet high, extending the whole length of the grounds. The deep ditches between have a supply of water even in the dry season, and a simple instrument is used to sprinkle the plants with it several times a day. The gardener lives within the premises, his small dirty hut guarded by a multitude of dogs and a horrible stench of pigsty. The artificial ridges of the paddy-fields beyond, three feet high, make quite comfortable footpaths in the dry season.

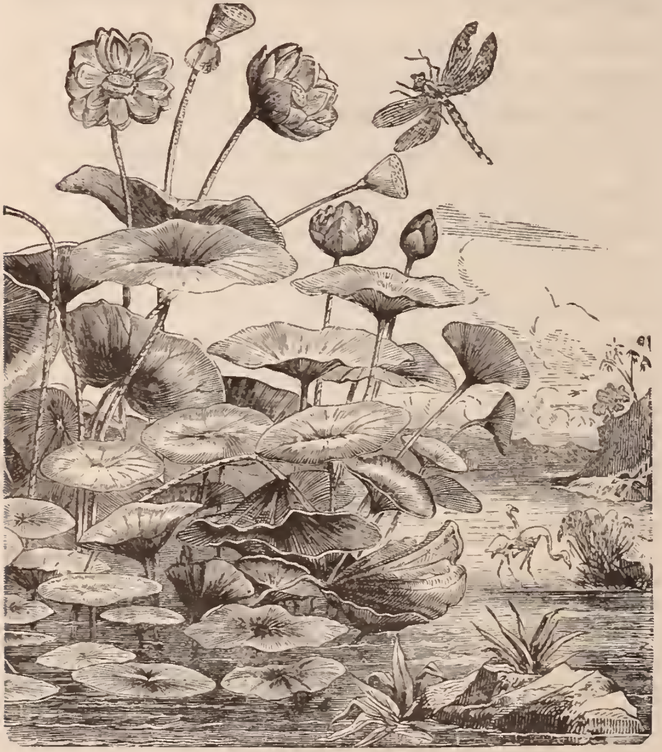
The Indo-Chinese fruits are of great excellence of flavor, and almost every day of the year furnishes a new variety. The best oranges are plentiful; pineapples are a drug in the market; lemons, citrons, pomegranates are abundant and very cheap. As the season advances, mangoes, guavas, custard-apples and the like follow in quick succession; on some kinds of trees buds, flowers, green and ripened fruit may be found at the same time. The small mahogany-colored mangosteen is perhaps the most popular of tropical fruits. One species of the sac has a fruit weighing from ten to forty pounds, which cut in thick slices will supply a meal to twenty persons, and a single tree will produce a hundred such fruit; the bright yellow wood of this tree is used for dyeing the priests' robes. The tamarind grows to an enormous height and lives for centuries; under its shade the Siamese assemble for most of their social games. The durian, a child of the forest, has something the appearance of an elm; the large fruit, cased in a thick hard rind as difficult to break as a cocoanut-shell and covered with strong spines, gives a dangerous blow in falling. The five shells within each contain several seeds rather larger than a pigeon's egg filled with custard-like pulp of a strong odor and unique flavor. The plantain or banana has some forty varieties, with fruit varying greatly in size as well as in flavor. It is the first fruit given to



THE BREAD-FRUIT.

babies, and, the Moslems say, was the gift of Allah to the Prophet in his old age when he lost his teeth. The trees bear fruit but once, and then are followed by others from the same root. The useful bamboo is a tree-like plant with a jointed stem, producing branches with willow-shaped leaves, which wave in the wind, giving an elegant feathery appearance. So rapid is its growth, somctimes two feet in a single day, that the plant attains its height of sixty to seventy feet in a few months. It is said to have seven admirable qualities—strength, lightness, roundness, straightness, smoothness, hollowness and divisibility. The short succulent shoots are served on the table like asparagus, pickled or candied. According to the Chinese proverb, the grains are "more abundant when rice fails." The stems furnish bottles, buckets, baskets, fishing-rods, posts, bridges, walls, floors, roofs, and even the string that lashes together rafter and beam of the common native house in Indo-China.

Under the stimulating sunshine of the tropics a profusion of rare shrubs and some of the most beautiful flowers reward slight labor with a rapidity of growth and bloom unknown in colder regions. Roses of one sort or another are perennial. Bright geraniums, brilliant lilies and numberless plants indigenous to the country are in great demand and cultivated extensively for domestic or religious uses. There are seven varieties of the lotus, the favorite sacred flower of all Buddhist countries. The red pond-lotus is most common; the blue, green, light and dark-yellow flowers are rarer. The smallest variety has a white flower scarcely larger than a daisy, and is found in the rivers, principally at the season of inundation. The rose-colored lotus, whose golden stamens breathe a delicious fra-

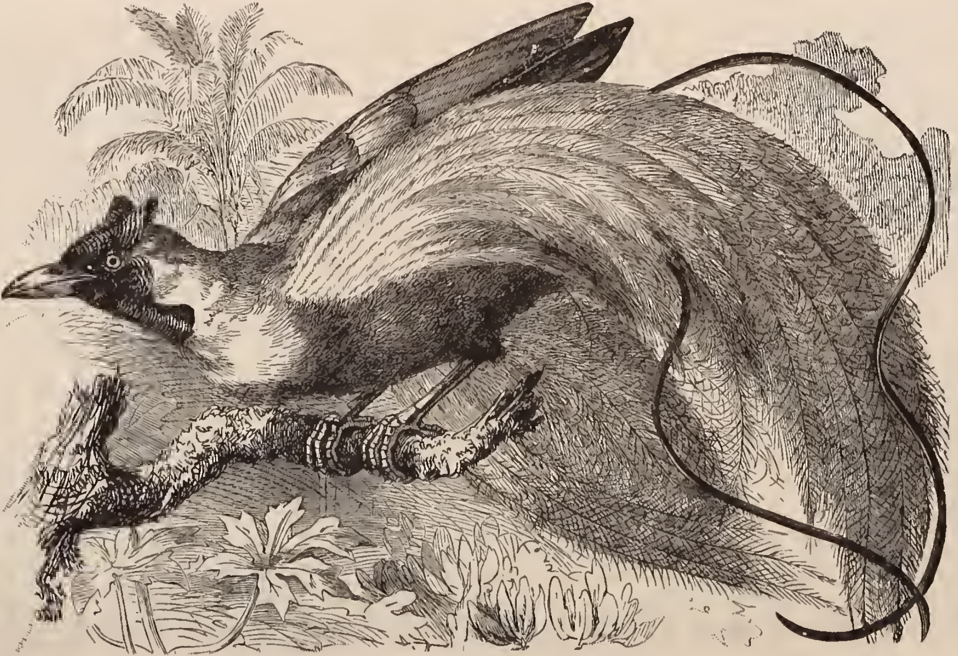


THE LOTUS.

grance, is the ornament of all festivities, and is sent as an offering to royalty, the priests and Buddha himself. The mali, a fragrant white flower about the size of a pink, is much cultivated in the neighborhood of Bangkok. It grows on a shrub about three feet high. The wreaths worn around the topknots of children are braided from this flower, which is also used for necklaces, bracelets and to perfume water. Rare and beautiful orchids are also here in large numbers, and many of the varicolor-leaved plants find this their native home.

Throughout the Indo-Chinese peninsula are great belts of trackless forests of teak and other valuable woods, tropical trees yielding rich gums and aromatic odors—the tall, exquisitely graceful wood-oil tree; the india-rubber, gutta-percha—first discovered in Malayland—and other varieties of the Ficus; the cajaput, the upas, the gamboge. There are thousands of miles of these jungles never yet subdued by man, through whose green twilight the traveler can only force his way axe in hand. Here are majestic trees, it may be a hundred and fifty feet high and of great girth, draped with a whole world of dangling vines and parasite trailers, spreading everywhere a canopy of leaf and gorgeous blossoms; the liana hanging its scarlet and orange clusters a hundred feet overhead across some stream; tough ratan cables a thousand feet long, knotting together a whole grove; avenues of intersecting branches, like the aisles of a Gothic cathedral, covered with yellow flowers of a most delicious fragrance; the white and purple of the pemea, combining the beauties of the rhododendron and horse-chestnut; the blue-blossoming Thunbergia; the Burmese Amherstia, like a giant fuchsia on the scale of an oak. Then there is the graceful palm tribe—the palmyra; the date; the lofty areca with its sweet-scented buds and great clusters of nuts; the tufted-crowned, sea-loving cocoanut, whose fruit supplies food, drink and oil, its fibrous casing ropes, vessels and mats, and its plaited leaves dishes and the thatch of the native's cottage, the large stalks fences, and whose slender bole is adapted for innumerable uses from a post to a canoe. Underneath all this Oriental shade a lovely confusion of fungi, mosses, and every variety of ferns, from delicate maiden-hair to the tall fronds fifteen and twenty feet high.

Birds of brilliant plumage and beautiful form inhabit these Oriental forests—long-legged swamp-fowls, tall as a man and swift as a greyhound; paroquets with green bodies and scarlet beaks fly screaming from tree to tree; the snowy pelican, the white ibis, the argus, the blue-jay, the black and white robin; birds of paradise and humming-birds. The sea-swallow builds her nest in the hollows and caves

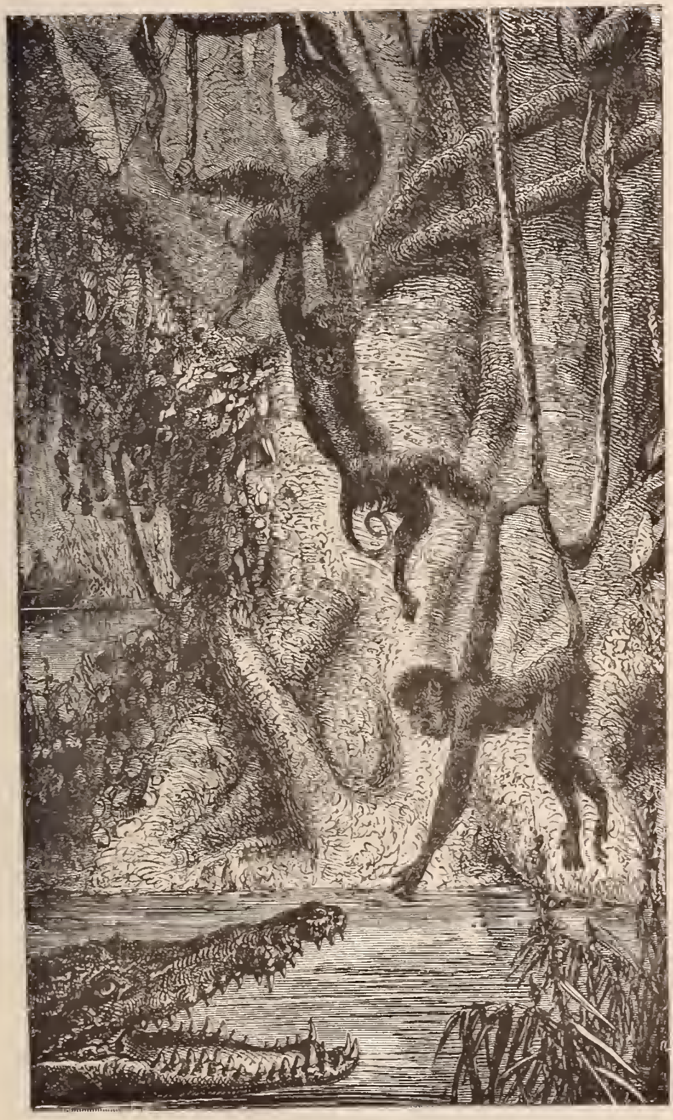


BIRD OF PARADISE.

of the rocky coast, and doves and pigeons are in endless variety. Winged things of myriad kinds troop, great and small—immense butterflies, jewel-like beetles, brilliant dragon-flies, thousands of moths—while at dusk swarms of fire-flies illumine the glades, and the night is noisy with the flitting and buzzing of the insect world.

Animals fierce and large as those of Africa infest these jungles; their footprints are all along the paths—wild elephants and boars, the tapir, the royal tiger, the one-horned rhinoceros, the buffalo, herds of deer, wild hogs and squirrels, afford a sportsman plenty of use for his gun; uncanny flying-foxes, and chattering monkeys linked, chain-fashion, hand to tail, or pelting each other with fruit and nuts. Innumerable water-snakes glide among the reeds; the cobra or hooded serpent is abundant; surly alligators, with their ugly red mouths wide open, and huge saurians bask in sunny spots or float like logs upon the surface of the water; leeches abound in the swampy lowlands; frogs and turtles and tortoises, larger than any ever seen in temperate regions, throng the marshes and streams.

Indo-China also offers a first field of inquiry to the geologist. The peninsula is very rich in minerals; gold is said to be most productive at the foot of the "Three Hundred Peaks;" copper and tin are found in large quantities; silver in connection with copper and lead; and there are



MONKEYS PLAYING WITH A CROCODILE.

unquestionably large unworked deposits of coal and petroleum. Precious stones, brilliant diamonds, deep-blue sapphires, rubies of finest color, emeralds, topazes, rock-crystals and other gems used to ornament the crowns of kings and emperors are a part of the natural wealth.

Such, then, are the general characteristics and geographical outlines of the Indo-Chinese peninsula.

CHAPTER II.

SIGHT-SEEING IN BANGKOK.

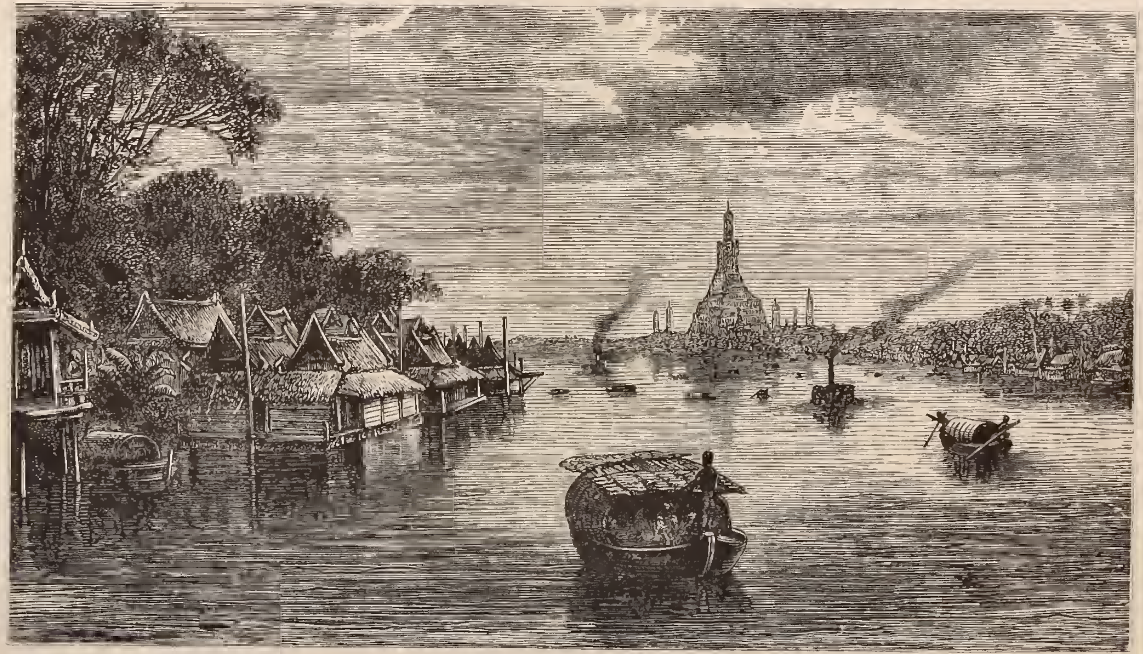
TO give you some idea of Bangkok, the capital city of Siam, I will imagine myself once more a resident there, with you for a visitor, and will invite you this fine morning to take a seat in our family boat, which is at the landing, and we will go out upon the river.

It is a strange city, unlike any in the Western World, and if we cannot "see the lions," we may perhaps "see the elephants" and many novel and interesting things. You have already become somewhat familiar with the copper-colored complexion, the black eyes, black hair and black teeth, the scanty clothing and shaven heads of the people.

We will confine our excursion to-day to the Menam River, the Broadway of Bangkok, while the hundreds of canals that intersect it at every angle may be considered the less-important streets. You find the river a busy scene, but need have no fears of a collision with any of the innumerable boats of every size and description that pass, for the Siamese are very skillful boatmen.

Your attention is already attracted by the beautiful *wat*, or temple, with its surroundings, on our right. Is it not a beautiful spot, so prettily laid out with fine shade trees, flowering plants and well-swept walks? There are about two hundred wats in Bangkok consecrated to the worship of Buddha. Some of them have groves several acres in extent, containing pagodas, image-houses, priests' dwellings and salas, or lounging-places. They occupy the pleasantest parts of the city, and the deluded people spend vast sums on these temples and their idols, expecting in this way to make merit for themselves. You will not wonder that they are anxious to make all the merit they can when their religion teaches them that at death their soul enters the body of some animal—a bird, it may be, or a snake, an elephant or a buffalo—unless they have made enough merit to be born something better and higher.

Observe the exterior of this temple. What a gay appearance the neat-colored tiles give the roof! The front, how laboriously carved and how richly gilded! The doors and windows too are more or less carved and gilded. Now we will go inside. The scenes with which these inner walls are so gayly painted are chiefly from the life of Buddha, and see, in the farther end, on



BANGKOK ON THE MENAM.

an ornamental throne, is an immense gilt image of this deity in a sitting posture. This is made of brick and mortar, but idols are sometimes of gold, silver, brass, ivory, wood and stone. All have the same self-complacent, sleepy look. Look! a worshiper has followed us in. Watch his movements. See him prostrate himself before the idol, touching his forehead three times to the floor, and now he lays his simple offering of flowers upon the altar. Mark the complacency of his countenance as he leaves, no doubt feeling that he has added not a little to his stock of merit.

HOUSE-SPARROW.

But we must return to our boat and move on up the river, for I hope to have time to visit the royal temple and perhaps some others.

Ah! there are some priests. I feared we should not meet any of these yellow-robed gentry. How strange they look with shaven heads and eyebrows! Such as these are the religious teachers of the country. A few years ago there were ten thousand in Bangkok alone and some thirty thousand in the kingdom—a perfect army (with few exceptions) of self-conceited idlers; but I am happy to tell you that their number has now greatly diminished. They live on the charity of the people, going about every morning from house to house among their parishioners, with their alms-bowl, and with a fruit-bag slung over one shoulder. The old mother or grandmother is up at an early hour to have rice cooked and ready for them. She puts a ladleful of hot rice into the bowl of each as he passes, and a handful of fruit into his fruit-bag. Do they thank her? By no means. She ought rather to thank them, for they have given her an opportunity to make merit. They collect sufficient for their morning and noonday meal. Their religion forbids them to take food after midday.

Notice the boats. Some, used for trading, are loaded with rice, sugar, salt, cotton, oil, dried fish, or dye-woods, as the case may be. Some are at once boat, shop and dwelling. In the distance is a nobleman's boat, propelled by a dozen or two paddlers. What an odd little house in the centre! Do you see how much at his ease His Lordship is reclining, with two or three attendants down on their elbows and knees before him? Look yonder at that small boat paddled by a little child five or six years old. How unconcerned the little fellow seems as he moves about entirely alone, his boat hardly larger than himself, the edge scarcely two inches above the water! Men, women and children in this country can swim; should this child upset he would look out for himself and think very little of the matter.

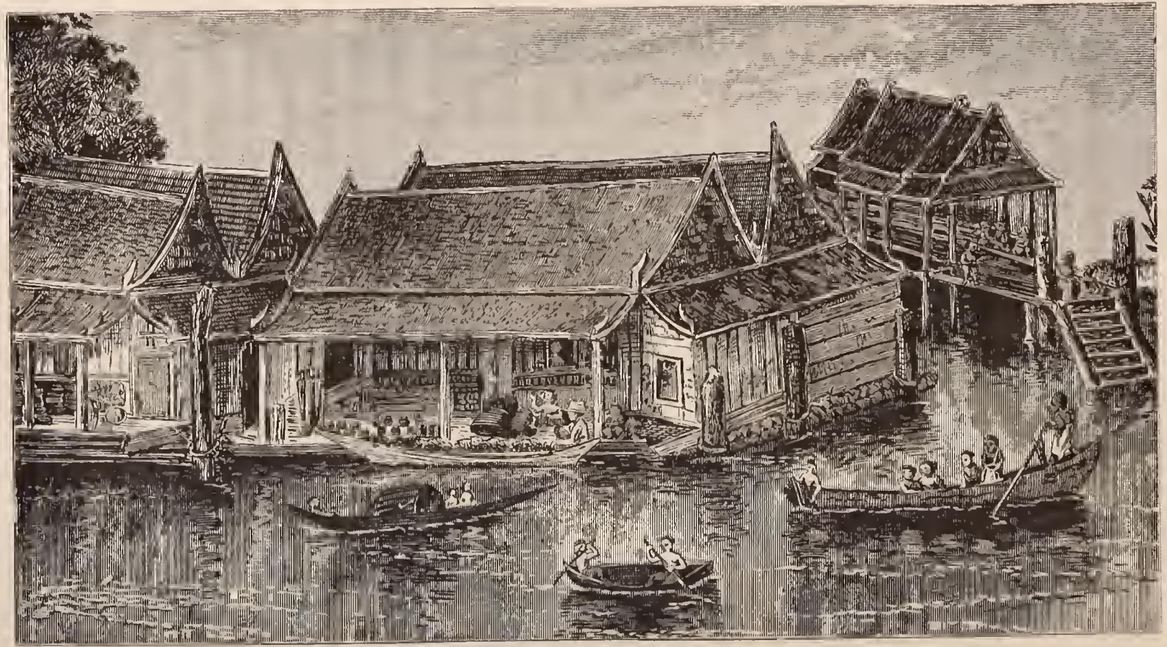
Many smaller craft are market-boats, with fruits and vegetables for sale. Notice some of the fruits as they pass. That one nearly as large as a child's head and resembling a huge orange is the shaddock or pomelow. This large one, which smells so very disagreeably, and which is so completely encased in spines as if to say, "Touch me not!" is the far-famed durian, which the natives consider the king of fruits. It weighs from five to ten pounds. This small round mahogany-colored fruit is the delicious mangosteen—that golden one, the luscious mango. Then there are the rich custard-apple, the refreshing orange, the blushing rhambutan, the pineapple, the banana, etc.

You see the flags of many different nations flying from the ships, of which none are more beautiful than the "star-spangled banner" of our native land. There are also scores of steam-yachts on the rivers of Siam now, owned by the natives, but when I first came here there was not one to be seen. You ask what these strange-looking craft, moored by immense ratan cables, are? They are Chinese junks, and it would be hard to tell where the Chinese obtained their model. The wonder is that such clumsy, unshapely, unsightly things can be made to traverse the sea. And the glowing colors in which they are painted, red always predominating! And don't overlook the large eye painted on each bow. The Chinese say, "No got eye, how can see?"

But you must not get so much interested in the boats and the fruits as not to notice the *homes* of this people. Many of the princes and nobles now have fine houses handsomely furnished. The missionaries, foreign consuls, merchants and wealthy Chinese have good, substantial dwellings. The homes of the common people, you see, are small, of one story, and thatched with the leaves of the attap palm. Most of them are neither painted nor whitewashed. Those upon the land are placed on posts six feet high, and the sides of many of them are made of bamboos split and woven together, forming a kind of basket-work.

But thousands of the people live in *floating* houses, which you have observed lining both banks of the river. Notice them particularly now, for they are one of the peculiarities of this Eastern city. They are but one story high, you see, and built of boards and placed on rafts of large bamboos, which rise and fall with the tide, and hence are called *floating houses.* These rafts must be renewed every two or three years. The houses are kept in their place by large posts on each side driven deep into the muddy bed of the river. They do sometimes, however, get detached from their moorings, though fastened to them by rings of ratan, and float up or down the river with the tide. These houses have some advantages over all others, for if neighbors are disagreeable or a fire breaks out the occupants have only to move off with the tide, house, furniture and all, to some other spot.

You will observe that many of them are open in front with a veranda, and are shops. This one seems to have a variety, and we will stop a few moments. You perceive there are no show-cases, but the smaller and more fanciful articles are displayed on these shelves, arranged one above another, like a flower-stand, to the height of some three feet. Are you waiting for the shopkeeper? The personage seated on the floor by the side of his goods is none other than he. He seems quite indifferent about selling, but look about and see what of all this mixed medley you will purchase. There, in the way of dry goods,



FLOATING STORES AT BANGKOK.

are bleached and unbleached and turkey-red muslins, Siamese waist-cloths and some fading calicoes. Here are a few boxes of tea, some native umbrellas, a bunch of peacock-feathers, tigers' skins and tigers' bones, piles of coarse crockery, pieces of matting, etc. There are also pretty little brown teapots and tiny cups, all of which at home would be considered toys for children, but, I assure you, they are as large as any used by the tea-drinkers of this country. There is a set now on a little tray behind you that are in daily use. Ah! you want to purchase a set with the tray, do you? Well, you have made a very good selection, but the shopman may not fancy your flat silver coins, though they are fast being introduced. Make your selection and I will pay your bills. I have yet to show you the money of the country. See! a stamped silver bullet, with a small notch cut out of one side. What does it remind you of? I do not wonder you smile. This largest piece is a *tical*, and is worth sixty cents; this next size is a *salung*, or fifteen cents; this smallest a *fuang*, or seven and a half cents. If I had come shopping with you a few years ago, and you had wanted any smaller change, I should have used cowrie-shells, of which it took one thousand to equal a dime. The shopman is paid, and now with the Siamese good-bye, *Chah! lah! pi kaun*, we must move on. Do not think these are the only shopping-places in the city, for besides several fine foreign stores we might, if we had time, go up into the Chinese bazaar, which is about a mile long. We should find there tailors, blacksmiths, druggists, goldsmiths, idol-makers, dyers, etc.

We are just passing a floating-house restaurant. We will move slowly and see what they have—pork steaks, ducks, fowls, hot rice and curry, dried fish and vegetables. Shall we call? No? Well, then, we will take our own lunch that we have brought with us, and, refreshed by it, be ready to visit a royal temple which we shall soon reach.

Notice this large canal on our right, for it extends entirely around the city proper, following the line of the city-wall, which is five miles in circumference, till it meets the river again.

Do you notice that smoke rising in yonder temple-ground? It is from a funeral pile, for in this country the dead are *burned*, unless they committed suicide, were struck by lightning or died of cholera or some other disease causing sudden death, in which case they are considered as deficient in merit and undeserving of burning. You will be surprised when I tell you that two armsful of wood are sufficient to reduce a body to ashes.

Look at that lofty tower on the left, rising full two hundred feet, with such exquisite proportions. It is considered the finest pagoda in Bangkok, but I think the four tall, gracefully-tapered spires in the wat-ground directly opposite are not much behind in beauty. Under the long, tiled roof near them reclines an image of Buddha which is perhaps the largest idol in the world. There is a huge one on this side that towers up seventy feet as it sits cross-legged, but we will cross over and visit the larger one, the "Sleeping Idol." Let us land and look about a while before we enter the principal temple. You see there are other temple-buildings and small pagodas, besides the usual houses for the hundreds of priests. In one of these temples are to be seen four hundred images of Buddha, life-size and each seated on a gilded throne. Now we will go in and see the immense image. The temple itself is two hundred feet long, and the idol at least one hundred and sixty feet long. You see it lies on its side, as if asleep. It is made of brick and heavily gilded. I suppose the gold-leaf is of many thicknesses in some places, for worshipers generally stick on a fresh piece. As we have our yard-measure, let us see how long the feet are. Five yards and more! and each toe is one yard long! Buddha's toes and fingers are supposed to have been all of one length, and look at the soles of the great feet, so beautifully inlaid with figures in mother-of-pearl!

But come, we must not linger longer here.

The palace of His Majesty is near, and we must get a glimpse of this, though I fear its exterior will not be as imposing as you thought. The palace-grounds are enclosed by a wall about a mile in circumference. Here are the audience-halls, the mint, arsenal, halls of justice, museum, royal chapel, and separated from them by an inner wall is the royal harem, which is in itself a compact little town, with several streets, a bazaar, a temple, pleasure-gardens and the homes of the numerous wives, sisters and other relatives of the king.

This gate in the city-wall will give us access to the stables of the elephants. Were it early in the morning we should see them coming down to the river to bathe and drink.

Our walk takes us through a market, but you must not look for neatness or order, only a confused display of vegetables and fruits, betel-nuts, cigars, odd-looking cakes, eggs, salted and fresh fish, dried meats. But why this commotion? Ah! the reason is plain, for there, with his train of attendants, comes a prince borne rapidly along in an open palanquin on the shoulders of men, and the traders and customers must make way for him. Ten years ago all, as if impelled by one impulse, would have respectfully dropped down on elbows and knees, but the present young king has done away with this servile custom. Ten years ago hat or cap, stockings or shoes, would not have been needed to denote his greatness, the number of his retinue showing that. Notice his attendants. One carries an immense state umbrella over the head of His Lordship; then there is the sword-bearer and the pipe-bearer; one carries his gold betel-box and tray, another his spittoon; one has his lighted match-rope, another his fan, and another his golden vessel of drinking-water. Now the prince has passed, and we may go on our way to the elephant-stables, which are very neat. Let us venture in. You need not fear that they are not securely fastened by those large ropes to the posts. How incessantly they sway their great trunks, as if weary of confinement! The burnished metal rings which encircle the white tusks of the larger ones look like gold, but their small peculiar eyes forbid close examination. These bundles of fresh grass by the door are cut by state criminals, whose lifelong business it is each morning to furnish sufficient for the day. There are several other stables, each having three or more elephants, but we will not prolong our walk, for I think you must be satisfied with sight-seeing for one day. The tide will be with us, and we will return at once to the mission premises, some miles below us, leaving other objects of interest till another day. I should like you to visit the royal mint, the spacious, elegant building where the curious money is made, and you ought not to return to America without attending the centennial exhibition, for Bangkok is now (in 1882) one hundred years old. It is said that the royal jewelry there on exhibition is valued at about five million dollars. There is a pyramid of untold wealth which from base to summit is brilliant with rings, crowns, rich chains, bracelets and anklets, and boxes with diamonds and precious stones of every description. Light is thrown on it by reflectors, so that the beautiful things are seen to the best possible advantage.

As we came up the river I did not point out to you our *upper* Presbyterian mission-station. It is just here on our right. The fine building is the girls' boarding-school, the first in the kingdom of Siam. The pretty chapel connected with the school was built by gifts from American women.

We are just passing on our left the Baptist mission to the Chinese, and the little English chapel, where there is English service every Sabbath afternoon, conducted by the missionaries. And now here we are at our own landing again.

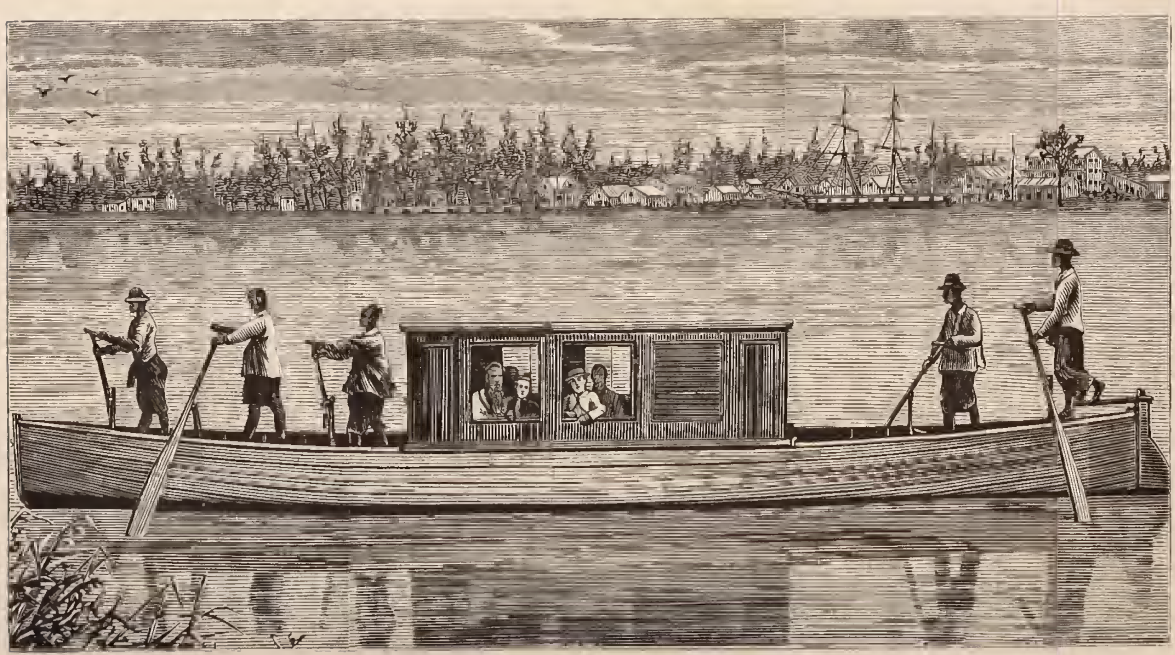
CHAPTER III.

TOURING IN SIAM.

IN the cool season in Siam, or in the months of December and January, the missionaries frequently go in boats into the country, to be absent two, three, or four weeks at a time, and as there are no hotels in Siam they live in their boats day and night. These boats have a snug little house in the centre, about seven by five and a half feet, and are propelled by six boatmen, who use long oars and stand behind them when rowing. They are paid about twenty cents a day, and their rice is given them. The missionaries take with them hundreds of religious books and tracts in the Siamese language, which they distribute as they travel from village to village, preaching and giving instruction to all who will listen.

Perhaps you will be interested in an account of one of these mission tours taken by Dr. House and myself.

One fine December morning, after seeing our books, clothing, bedding, provisions, dishes, cooking utensils, and even our table, all snugly stowed away in the little boat, we left our quiet home in Bangkok, the capital city.



MISSIONARY-BOAT FOR TOURING IN SIAM.

Ascending the beautiful Menam River, we made our way among numerous boats of every size and description, ships displaying the flags of several different nations, and gayly-painted, clumsy Chinese junks that were moored by their huge cables in the stream, and on, on we went, leaving the busy, idolatrous city behind us. At five o'clock we stopped at a pleasant Buddhist temple by the river-side for our evening meal. This finished, we moved on for an hour or two after dark, and then moored our boat for the night by fastening it to two bamboo poles which our men had planted in the soft mud near the bank.

Here let me tell you what our sleeping arrangements were for each night. What had been our dining- and sitting-room through the day was soon converted into a bedroom, and in a very simple way too. The seats of our boat were arranged along the sides, omnibus-fashion, and, filling up the space between these with boards made for the purpose, we had our bedstead, and our boat-cushions made our bed. Having spread our bedding and hung up the indispensable mosquito-net by strings from the four corners of the roof, we were ready to commend ourselves to the kind care of Him who never slumbers, and lay us down for a good night's sleep.

The boatmen spread their mats on the deck outside the cabin, and, putting up a kind of temporary roof made of leaves fastened together, they were protected from the dew, and were contented and happy.

Generally at daylight every morning the men would move on a while before breakfast. We always preferred to stop for meals or for the night near some temple or village.

While taking our dinner one day the two windows of our boat on the side of the river-bank being open, the people who were collected there seemed much pleased to see us use knives, forks and spoons. It was a novel sight to them, as they use the fingers instead. An aged couple watched us with much seeming interest for some time, and then the husband said to his wife, "*Kin yark nuk*" (They eat with great difficulty).

When we first went to Siam not one woman or little girl in one hundred could read, although all the boys are taught by the priests in the temples to read and to write. One day a very bright, interesting little girl, twelve years old perhaps, came to our boat to see the strangers, and when asked if she could read, she did not answer yes or no, but with surprise exclaimed, "Why, I'm a *girl!*" as if we ought to have known better than to ask a girl such a question.

One day, while our cook was preparing our simple meal of rice and curry, we walked out into the pleasant grounds of a temple. Here we found a fine large tree whose beautiful white, wax-like flowers attracted us by their fragrance. While gathering some of them a young man came up and spoke to us. Fearing he would think we were going to offer the flowers to the idols in the temple, Dr. House said, "I am not going to offer these, as you would, to idols which can neither see nor smell them, but shall give them to my wife, who can enjoy them." The tree seemed almost alive with gay butterflies. Several priests had gathered about us, and when they were asked if all this life and happiness and beauty did not make them think there must be a wise and good Creator who made the trees, flowers and butterflies with their gay dress, they replied "*Pen eng*" (They made themselves). Oh, is it not sad that the religion of this poor people teaches them there is no living God, no Creator who made this beautiful world? The dead god Buddha that they worship, whose images are in every temple, was but a man like themselves, and, now that he has left the world, knows and cares nothing about it.

An old priest begged our umbrella. The doctor said, "If I give it to you, very soon you will want to make merit, and will perhaps spread it over some senseless idol of brick and mortar that cannot feel the heat as we do." Soon after, as they followed us to the boat, we actually saw an old umbrella which the wind had blown from a dilapidated image it had sheltered. When reminded of what had just been said, they laughed heartily, but I fear were not convinced of the folly of doing such things.

In the listening group one day was a gray-headed man, who asked, "Is Jesus the same as God?" "What must we do that the Lord Jesus may save us?" "What deeds of merit must we do to be followers of the true God?" When we told him that we left our home, our parents and our friends, and journeyed many thousand miles over the sea, on purpose to tell him and his countrymen of the religion of Jesus, the only Saviour from sin, he thanked us. We gave him a gospel tract on prayer, hoping that the light he had received might lead him to pray for more.

On one occasion we stopped at an old preaching-place to rest. Let me tell you what a queer place it was for a sermon. It was a large room open on all sides and decorated with sticks of very small bamboo, to which were pasted small triangular pieces of white paper. Thousands of these were clustered fancifully together. From the ceiling in the centre of the room hung a piece of cloth two or three yards long, on which was a coarse picture of Buddha with a disciple on each side of him, and above them in the clouds angels with flowers. Below them, on a black ground to represent darkness, were painted persons suffering the torments of hell and the priests trying to assist them.

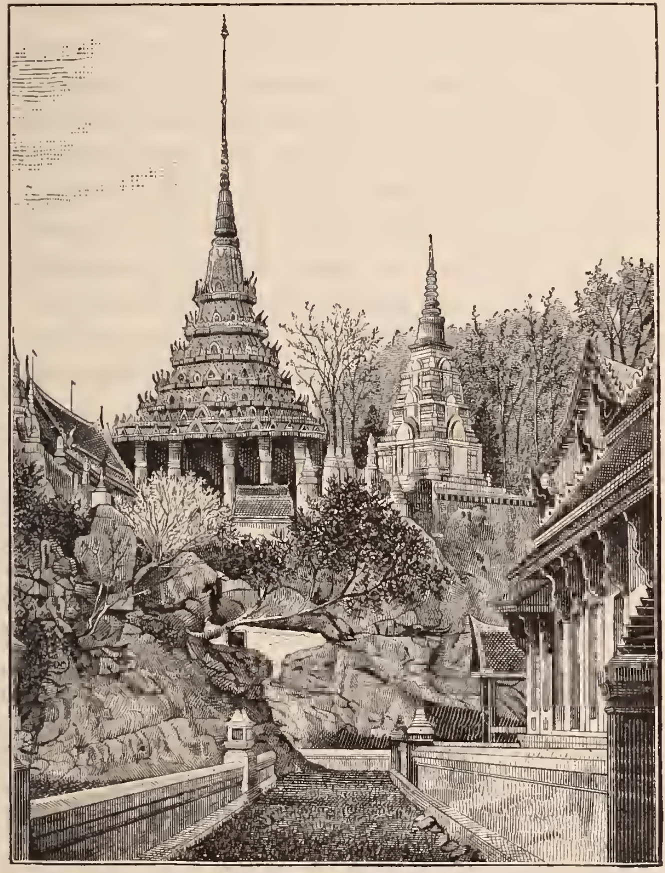
The pulpit was a kind of high, armed chair, coarsely decorated. In this the yellow-robed priests sit cross-legged and preach in a sing-song tone. Seeing two images of Buddha there, we told those assembled of the sin and folly of trusting in them. A young man replied at once, "How should we know better, when there is no one to tell us? I beg to listen while you tell us;" and he did listen very attentively. His question touchingly reminded us of the words of Paul: "How shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent?" (Rom. 10: 14).

One day we visited an image-house, and found one idol that had fallen over backward, another without a head, another without arms. When we came out an old priest asked us if we had been in to worship. We replied, "No, indeed! What we saw there were objects of pity rather than of adoration. They cannot take care of themselves, cannot hold themselves up; what can they do for you or for us?"

Thus we went from one village to another, conversing with hundreds of the people and giving away our books until they were gone.

A VISIT TO THE "MECCA" OF THE SIAMESE.

Every February multitudes of the Siamese visit Prabat. The word means sacred foot, and it is supposed that Buddha left a clear imprint of his foot in a rock on a mountain there, which



PRABAT.

is a standing proof to all his followers that he once not only really lived upon earth, but that he visited Siam.

Let me tell you of a visit Dr. House and I once made to this sacred spot. As most of the traveling in Siam is in boats, we left home in ours one fine day in February, taking with us some Christian books and tracts. We ascended the beautiful Menam River, passing many thatched-roof villages and scores of temples. At Ayuthia, the old capital of the kingdom, we took the eastern branch of the river, and on the evening of the third day we reached Ta Rua, where we made our way to a landing-place through an immense number of boats of every description. From here we were to proceed by land to Prabat, a distance of about fourteen miles, and after engaging an elephant and making other arrangements, little time was left us for rest.

At two o'clock in the morning we were awakened and told that the elephant was in readiness. It was quite dark, and as by the dim torchlight I saw before me the huge form of the creature I was to mount, I confess to considerable reluctance and trembling. My husband climbed up first, and then, the elephant putting out his knee to receive me as it had him, I stepped upon it and with help managed to reach my lofty perch. The driver kept his place astride the creature's neck. One of the men scrambled up behind, and we were off, leaving the others to follow us soon in a buffalo-cart. It was too dark for any but a practiced eye to see the road, and in less than half an hour our driver contrived to lose the way, so that until daylight we groped on through the jungle, not knowing into what pit the beast might fall or when it might brush against a tree and throw us off. Committing ourselves to the great Care-taker, we watched for the first rays of morning light to guide us on our course, and when some time after sunrise we struck upon the beaten path we were happy and grateful indeed. Now I could see where I was, and found myself seated in a howdah, or covered saddle, made of strong wood. The top was a kind of basket-work lined with leaves, and so arranged as to protect us from sun and rain and from branches of trees as we passed. The elephant was about nine feet high, and the seat was raised at least a foot above his back. To novices the elephant-ride is apt to be rather alarming.

Our road much of the way lay through a beautiful piece of woods, the trees sometimes forming an arch over our heads. We passed multitudes of pilgrims going or returning, some riding on elephants, some in buffalo-carts and some on foot; also groups of natives seated by the way-side with *kowlan* (rice cooked in joints of bamboo), palm-tree sugar, wild honey in the comb, etc., to sell to passers-by. I enjoyed the ride and the novelty of the scenes around me very much. The motion and the creaking sound reminded us of an old-fashioned stage-coach on springs. The driver was asked how so huge an animal could be so easily controlled by man. He held up his stick, at the end of which was, not a lash, but a pointed iron spike or hook about three inches long and as large as one's finger. He said, "This is what makes them submissive." Well may the poor creatures fear it, for it is sometimes driven most unmercifully into their heads.

Our kind heavenly Father watched over us, our beast behaved nobly, and we arrived at Prabat safely about ten o'clock in the morning, instead of at seven, as we should if we had not lost our way. Here, nestling under the rocky sides of the mountain, were several *wats*, or monasteries, with their many dwellings for the priests, preaching-places, and huge image-houses, like the one seen on the right of the picture (p. 103). Hundreds of bamboo huts had been newly erected for the accommodation of the multitudes there assembled. The air was filled with the melody of sweet-toned bells and the lively tinkling music of numerous Siamese bands. A newly-vacated priests' house in one of the monasteries was soon put at our disposal. It contained but a single small room, with two windows and a little low door. There was a veranda on one side, where our servants could be accommodated. Travelers, in this country especially, must not be fastidious, and we were too glad to secure the shelter and the retirement the little dormitory promised to be disposed to look farther. On taking possession we found an old rice-pot, remnants of priests' yellow robes and plenty of dirt. One of our men soon disposed of the rubbish and made all as clean as he could without broom or water. Furnishing the room with the mats and cushions brought with us from the boat, we seated ourselves upon them Siamese fashion and with good appetites partook of our midday meal.

Before us we could see the picturesque mountain with its many white-spired pagodas and the splendid shrine or temple which is built over the sacred footprint. In the picture it is the elegant structure which you see, with a seven-storied roof terminating in a graceful tapering spire (p. 103). The whole being richly gilded, the rays of the sun resting upon it made it very beautiful. Having dined, we made our way to this temple. The rocky platform on which it stands is reached by some fifty or more steps (not seen in the picture), which devout Buddhists always ascend on their knees. Its outer walls are covered with bright mosaic. The large double doors are beautifully inlaid with figures of mother-of-pearl. On the inner walls are painted scenes from the life of Buddha. The apartment is about thirty feet square, and the floor is covered with plates of what they say is silver. On the walls hangs what is said to be a representation of the footprint, set with jewels and made of beaten gold. It is about four feet long and one and a half broad. Of what is worshiped as the footprint itself we could see nothing but a dark oblong opening in the floor like a small open grave. It is enclosed in a railing about a foot high, said to be of solid silver, and over it is an elegant gilt canopy with curtains of gold cloth at the sides.

There were many worshipers within the temple, and a great number of small wax candles or tapers burning. The poor devotees entered the sacred spot on their knees, and, crawling beside the footprint, bowed the head three times to the floor and laid their offering within the enclosure. Then, crawling to some water that had probably been blessed by the priests, they sprinkled their heads, and left the room, as they entered it, upon their knees. Some who perhaps were too poor to make any offering took up a priest's fan and with all the solemnity possible fanned the footprint. All these ceremonies were performed in perfect silence, and the place seemed truly solemn. Oh, how my heart ached to tell them the folly of all these things, and to point them to the almighty One whose footprints can everywhere be traced in nature!

When we were returning from the temple a messenger came running after us and invited us to the house of his master, who proved to be a nobleman of high rank from Bangkok. We had a very pleasant visit. Oranges and wild honey were served, and we drank tea poured from a massive gold teapot into tiny china cups. Many heard that afternoon the message we had brought. Reaching our house at evening, we spread our mats and took our seats upon the veranda. A crowd of people, who, like all the rest, had come there to make merit, soon collected around us. They supposed we also came to make merit, and there was no lack of opportunity for us to do so by giving to the various beggars that presented themselves. First came two distressed lepers. One, not able to walk, hitched himself along on the ground. He beat a Siamese drum with the stumps of his fingers, while the other beat two pieces of bamboo together, both singing at the same time the sad tale of their sufferings and inability to earn a living. Complimenting our generosity in advance, they begged for money. As they were really objects of pity, we gave each of them a small silver coin, upon which they broke forth in a shower of blessings: "May you flourish in this state of being and in the next—have elephants, horses and servants, silver and gold, rice, salt and every good thing! May your age be lengthened out to a hundred years, a thousand years! May you have handsome children—

sons who shall be priests and head priests! May you live in a well-built house with many roofs!" etc. A blind man came singing and beating two pieces of brass together; then an old man with a withered arm; and so they kept coming as long as we would listen to them. We improved the opportunity to tell these poor creatures the story of the blessed Jesus, who, while upon earth, healed the leper, restored the withered hand and gave sight to the blind, and who is now both able and willing to heal the greater maladies of the soul.

The next day was the Sabbath, and during morning worship with our servants many came around the door to listen. After worship Dr. House left me to receive any visitors who might call for conversation or books, and went forth on his labor of love, spending the day till dusk among the people. Hundreds heard from his lips of the great Being who made them and of the Redeemer who died to save them, and among them were many attentive listeners.

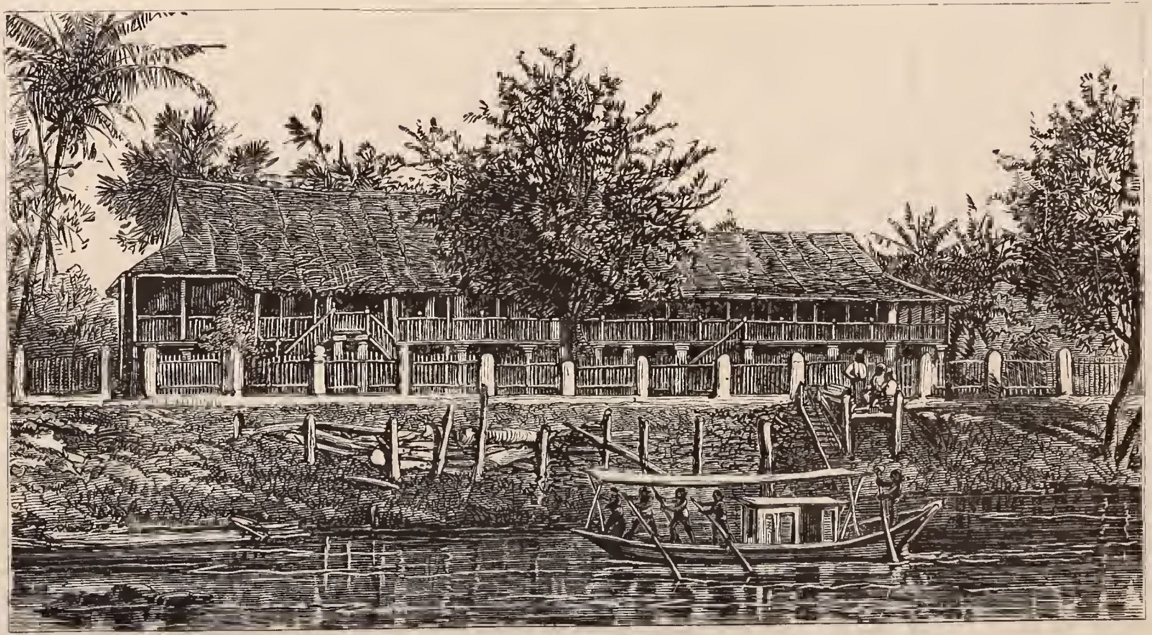
Monday morning we left for home. About eight o'clock there were two elephants at the door for ourselves and our men. This time we mounted ours with the help of a ladder placed against his side, and now, more at home in the lofty saddle, I quite enjoyed my ride. No special adventure befell us on the way, and about one o'clock we reached our boat and found all in it safe. Paying our boat-keeper his moderate charge for the care of it during our absence, and having rested and dined, we were soon in our boat and again on our homeward way. We visited the villages on the banks, distributed our remaining books, and talked with the people in their homes and the priests in their *wats*, or temples.

CHAPTER IV.

IN AND ABOUT PETCHABUREE.

OUR mission-boat, with its drawers and cupboards and shelves for storing away food, clothes, etc., awaits us at Bangkok. Rowers are hired for twenty-four cents per day, with enough rice for food. We start out with the rising tide in our favor. The boat moves steadily on. Reading, conversation and sleeping fill our time. At last we notice that the houses along the banks are larger and better built, and, passing around a bend of the river, we see our mission compound, consisting of three large brick houses and one smaller. Two of the houses are occupied by the mission family; the third is the Petchaburee Home for Siamese girls, in charge of the missionary ladies. The chapel front is used for worship each morning. The small house is Dr. Sturge's hospital.

Leaving the boat, we climb the steps on the left bank, and enter the yard with its green grass and blooming flowers. We are gladly welcomed, for our arrival here is a great treat.



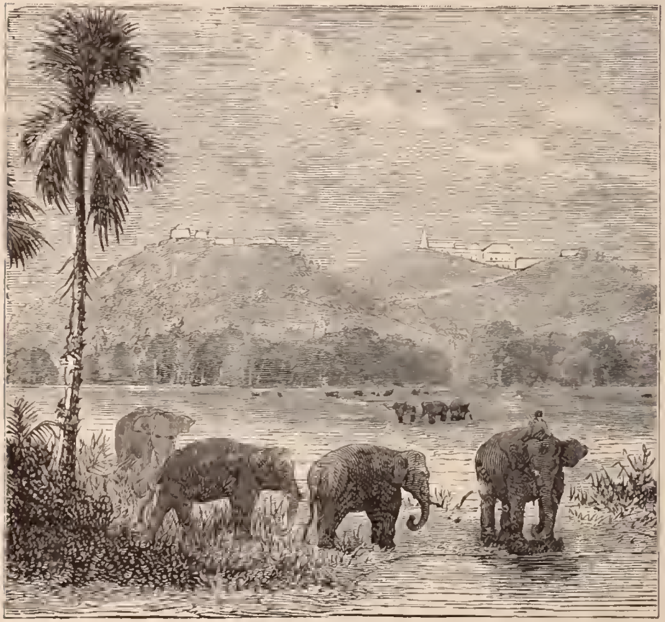
HOUSE AT PETCHABUREE.

Siam is one of the hot countries where everything moves slowly. Our boat-trip of from thirty-six to forty-eight hours has made us glad to rest till evening. When it is cooler we will take a walk to the nearest mountain, which is about three-quarters of a mile from the mission compound. The road along the river-bank is forty or fifty feet wide and very smooth, and shaded on either side by beautiful trees. We pass several native houses, and come to a beautiful grassy plain, beyond which are rice-fields reaching to the foot of "The Mountain of the Highest Heaven." On its summit stands the large royal summer palace, built by the late supreme king, whose white buildings glitter in the sun and form a beautiful contrast to the green ranges of distant hills. His Majesty and his court spend part of every year here. A paved walk with steps leads up the hill. Passing some plain two-story brick buildings, you come to the wide terraces and surrounding barracks of His Majesty's private apartments, the walls of which are covered with rough paintings representing some of the Buddhistic fables. The floor of the king's reception-room is paved with marble blocks about a foot square, and at one side is a raised seat for the king. Royalty in Siam never sits on a level with common people. A very pretty Brussels mat is placed for the king's feet, and when he visits the palace a set of stuffed chairs covered with blue brocade satin are brought to ornament the place.

There are a number of smaller buildings surrounding the palace for the numerous attendants of the king. On the very summit of the hill, separate from the palace, is a large audience-hall —a long, low room, almost entirely bare, with a semi-circular throne, consisting of four stone steps, at one end. Two large Siamese paintings —"The Reception of the French Ambassadors at Court" and "Bonzes Worshiping Gaudama"— are painted on the side-walls. There is also a round brick tower about thirty feet in height, used as an observatory. The view from this tower is enchanting—on one side extensive fields of ripened paddy, groves of sugar-palms and cocoanuts, with here and there a hill rising abruptly from the plain; the city, the river, the canals, and far off to the east the blue waters of the gulf; west and south there extend at least three distinct ranges of low, thickly-wooded hills.

If it were earlier in the day we would ascend the mountain and visit the Buddhist temple and large pagoda near, and measure the great image of Buddha, each foot seven feet long, with fingers and toes as large around as the body of a stout person; but it is nearing sunset and we turn our faces homeward.

Our road now leads through rice-fields, which reach to the foot of the mountain. We meet people coming home from their work in the fields. Some of them have poles across their shoulders, to which are attached bundles of sticks for fuel or perhaps sheaves of rice which they have gathered. Some stop to speak to us or to look at us, and we give them a tract or one of the Gospels; but we must not tarry, for when the sun is gone in these tropical countries it is soon dark. The brick building a little to the right as we return is the Presbyterian church of Petchaburee.



VIEW OF THE MOUNTAINS OF PETCHABUREE.

The next morning we take an early start for the Royal Cave. It is too far to walk, so we ride over the road which we took before to the foot of the mountain, then off to the right, a mile, to another mountain. We leave the conveyance and climb the mountain-side to a gate, which we enter, and find steps which lead down into the cave. The nooks and corners are filled with idols and figures representing the miseries of the lost, and the bottom of the cave is paved with tiles and surrounded on all sides with rows of idols, large and small. The cave itself is grand, with its columns of stalactites and stalagmites. From one of the former water drops so fast that a plaster basin has been made to receive it. This water is very cool and pleasant to drink. An opening at the top of the cave admits the sunshine and brightens the whole scene. Here are two large rooms, the second unpaved, but having rows of idols, and being lighted from the top like the first. Passing through this room, we come into a narrow way as dark as possible, leading into a very small space lighted from above, where we find a very long ladder. Up, up, we go, and again we find ourselves on the mountain-side. We are glad to return home, for the heat has grown very oppressive while we have been in the cave.

At about three o'clock we will take a walk to the city to see the market, and as we stroll along the bank of the river we pass the three brick houses belonging to the ex-regent of Siam. These are thickly shaded by large trees, and the green lawn is bounded by a hedge. Here we enter a street of the city, and soon come to a massive bridge, and, turning to the left, cross the river and find ourselves upon the main street of the city. It seems strange to call it a city, and yet its population is estimated at twenty thousand. The streets are very narrow and have no sidewalks. Some of the houses are brick and some bamboo. The stores have an open room next the street, with a little porch where the salesman or saleswoman sits. The people who have brought articles to market for sale have arranged their wares on either side the street, and now we are surrounded by fish, pork, vegetables and fruits in such abundance that it is difficult to make one's way among them.

As we pass up the street we come to a large open gate on either side. That on the left opens into the governor's grounds. His Excellency is hearing a case. The court-room is simply a shed, where the governor sits on a chair or bench, while the accused and accuser, the witnesses and judges, sit on the ground at his feet. The gate on the right opens into a yard surrounding the new courthouse, a good brick building, from which a walk leads to the river. This river is like one street of the city, for boats are passing and repassing constantly.

Leaving the market, we pass on and find the houses built farther apart, and there are more shade-trees. The people on either side are cooking their rice, and some are already eating. Soon we come to a nice clean cross-street, and, following this, we reach another running parallel with the river, and the prettiest street of the city. It has plenty of shade and several temples, including one in Chinese architecture, highly ornamented. In the temple-grounds are some very pretty flowers, and when we reach the governor's place we find a really beautiful garden, with a summer-house covered with blooming vines standing in the midst, surrounded by a variety of well-selected and beautifully-arranged flowers. A little farther on we come to a cross-street that brings us to the vice-governor's place, back across the main street and to the bridge. We pause here for our final look at the lovely scene. Up and down the river boats are passing constantly. On either side of the stream are stately palms, the spreading mango and the feathery branches of the bamboo. Facing the bridge where we stand is Palace Mountain, with its sides dressed in green and its summit crowned with the brilliancy of the setting sun. We gaze on its splendor, and as we stand hushed by the beauty all about us, our hearts go up in prayer that it may be but a symbol of the beauty of holiness that shall soon cover this fair land.

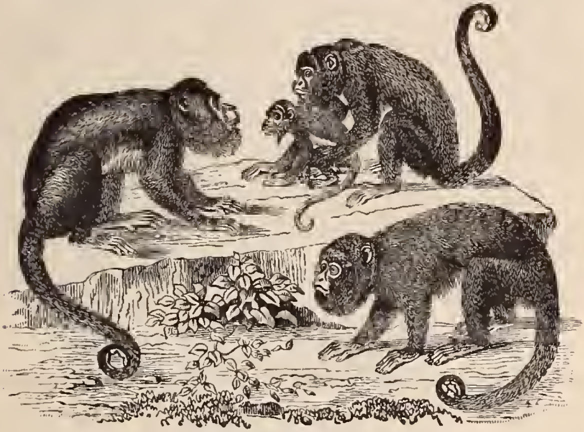
CHAPTER V.

THE ANIMALS OF SIAM.

PROVIDED with a tropical climate, the forests and jungles, the air and the water of Siam, teem with animal life. The elephant heads the list. It is said that the king can muster thousands of trained elephants for service in war. Tigers and bears, rhinoceri, deer, wild goats and porcupines are numerous. The bones of the tiger are sold as a tonic, and rhinoceros-horns sell in Bangkok for more than their weight in silver. The cattle are small, and are used only to tread out the grain or with pack-saddles to transport rice, silk or army supplies. The buffalo, or ungainly water-ox, takes the place of our oxen. The Siamese have no milch cattle, and know nothing of butter or cheese, and their religion forbids them to slaughter for food.

While the Siamese have great veneration for the white elephant, the white monkey, the white squirrel and some other white animals, they have a great dislike to a white cat. Their cats differ from ours in color. Some have long tails and some short ones; some have curled tails that look as if they had a knot tied in them, and some have no tails at all.

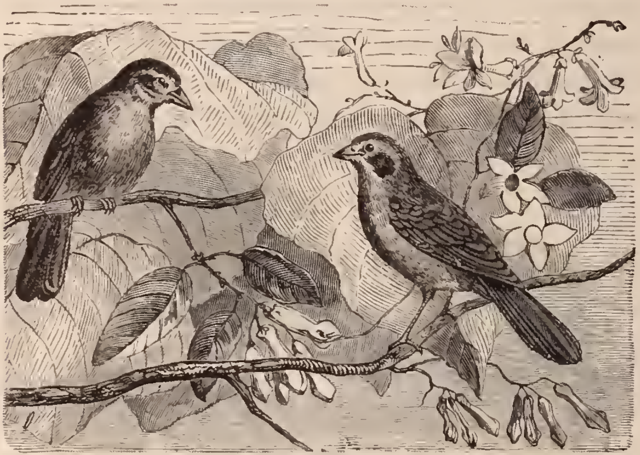
Miserable yellow dogs of the pariah race may be counted by thousands. They are a great annoyance to missionaries when they go into the country distributing books from house to house. We have had seven or eight rush out at us from one house, and it was only by the greatest watchfulness on our part and that of our servants that they could be kept from pouncing upon us. It really requires a brave heart to venture among them on such occasions.



MONKEYS.

When out in the country in our boats we have seen scores of monkeys with their young leaping from branch to branch on the trees or playing their antics on the bank, and thousands of bats, that prey upon the fruit-gardens by night, and during the day may be seen hanging by their feet in their shady haunts.

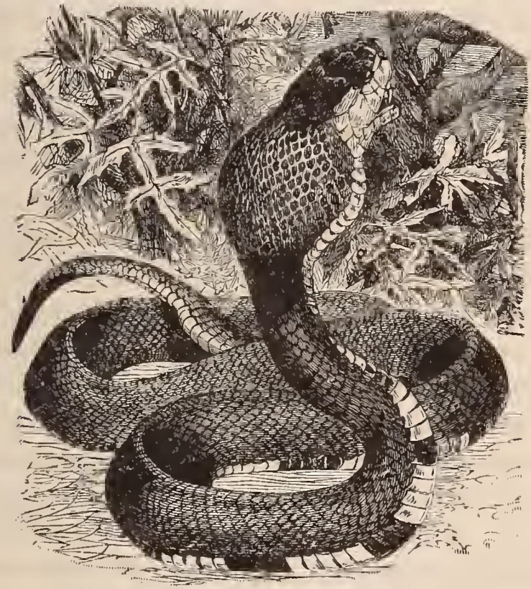
Siam has a variety of birds—the snow-white rice-bird, the kingfisher, the gay peacock, the pheasant, the parrot, and thieving crows of amazing number and audacity. There are many singing birds, among them a species of thrush that imitates all the sounds he hears. He will imitate the human voice, and bark, mew and crow. There is a small black-and-white bird that sings very sweetly at daybreak. Our domestic fowl is at home in Siamese jungles. Pelicans and other waterfowl abound.



JAVA SPARROWS.

The chief food of the common people is fish. They are found in great variety, and some of them are delicious. The streams so swarm with them that they often jump into the passing boats.

There are snakes, scorpions and centipedes in Siam, all of which frequently find their way into our houses. Some of the snakes are very venomous; among these the cobra, or hooded serpent, is abundant, and boa-constrictors ten and twelve feet long have often been killed while robbing our hen-roosts in Bangkok. One morning, on going into my bathroom, I found a snake three feet long. On another occasion, when about to retire, we found a very poisonous one under our bed. One of our missionaries carelessly left his



THE COBRA.

trunk open, and when he went for a change of linen, he found a snake coiled up in the bottom of it. I have found scorpions on my bed-curtains, on my centre-table and elsewhere, and frequently in my clothes-basket.

But more than all these we dreaded the mosquito, from which we were never free, day or night. At some seasons of the year these little tormentors were almost more than we could bear.

There are ants too, large and small, black, white and red, and their name is legion. Sideboards, tables or anything else in Siam upon which food is placed must stand in bowls of water or oil, and it will not do to forget this even for a few moments. One morning, on my way to the dining-room, I stopped and admired my canary bird that was hanging on my front veranda. Going out again after breakfast, I saw a procession of beautiful yellow feathers moving along on a beam over head, and on hastening to the cage I found my pet lying dead, stung to death by the red ants and nearly stripped of its plumage. One of our missionary families once went to spend a few weeks at another mission-station, and on their return they found the white ants had come up through the floor and had eaten their way through a trunk to the top, and every fold of the garments needed mending.

We never wearied watching the fireflies as in countless multitudes they would spread themselves over the branches of their favorite trees, and alternately, with the utmost regularity and exactness, all at once give out their diamond spark or hide their light in darkness.

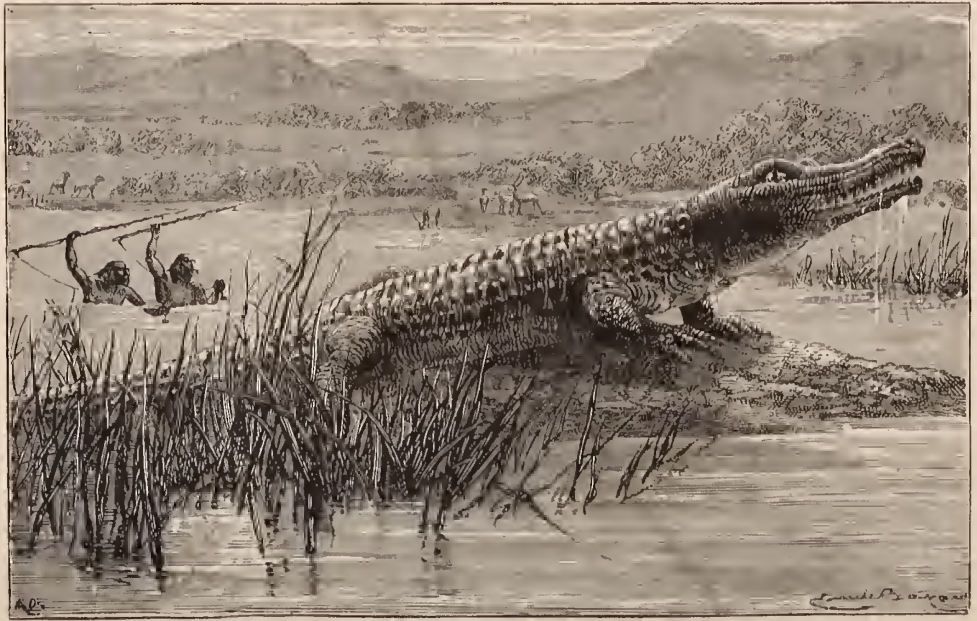
We were often serenaded at evening as we sat on our veranda by grasshoppers and crickets, while immense frogs would sing the bass in the grand chorus.

Beautiful, harmless little lizards, about a finger long, ready for their evening meal of mosquitoes and other insects, make their appearance on our walls and ceilings as soon as the lamps are lighted. I have often counted between twenty and thirty of them out at once. There is another lizard, almost as large as a young kitten, which also comes out on our walls for his evening meal, having hid through the day behind our mirrors or pictures. It is quite harmless, but with its loud outcry of *tookaah! tookaah!* it often startles new-comers from their midnight slumbers.

There are crocodiles in great numbers in the rivers and creeks of Siam. In one day's boat-ride on the Upper Menam, Dr. House once counted one hundred and seventy, varying in size from three to fifteen feet.

Let me tell one or two true stories of crocodiles. When we were once visiting the mission-station at Petchaburee a crocodile seized a young girl twelve years old and devoured her, leaving only an arm in the boat. The governor, wishing to destroy the monster, ordered a search to be made for it, and invited us to see the captures which his men made and brought to our landing. Three huge fellows, averaging twelve feet each, lay securely pinioned on the bottom of their boat, but neither of them proved to be the one sought for.

In the strange providence of God, whose kingdom ruleth over all, one of these terrible creatures once became the means of salvation to a Chinese fisherman in Siam, and through him of founding in a distant and important town a native church which now has many Chinese communicants. He was wading in the shallows at the head of the Gulf of Siam, collecting shellfish, when what he supposed was a log drifting toward him proved to be a huge crocodile, which attacked him fiercely, biting off his hand, so that it only hung by the tendons of the wrist. At his cries for help his comrades came and drove the creature away. Mortification set in, which would have ended in death had he not sought the missionary physician in Bangkok. My husband amputated the arm, the stump healed kindly, and when, at the end of the month, he left the mission hospital to return home, his gratitude and trust in those whose Christian kindness and care had saved his life led him to say that *their* God, of whom they had told him, should henceforth be *his* God. From that time he gave up the worship of idols and refused



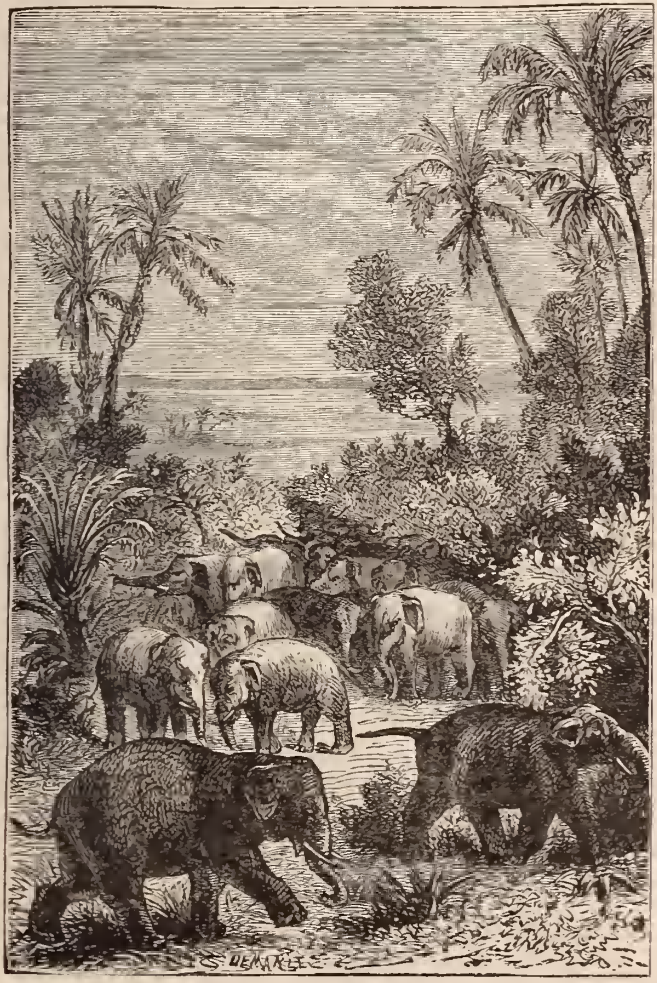
HUNTING THE CROCODILE.

to work on the Christian Sabbath. As he spoke only the dialect used by the brethren of the American Baptist mission, who are laboring among the Chinese of Siam, he was referred to them for further instruction, and was soon baptized. He invited the missionaries and native assistant to make his house at Bangplasoi a preaching-station. Some of his relatives and others were converted, a mission-chapel was built (largely with his assistance), and now there are there several hundred Chinese converts from heathenism, and Bangplasoi is an important mission-station among the Chinese.

ELEPHANTS.

Having lived twenty years in "The Land of the White Elephant," whose king has for one of his titles "The Lord of the White Elephant," and whose flag is a white elephant on a red ground, having often ridden on elephants, and my husband having twice narrowly escaped with his life when traveling with them, once having been badly gored by one,—I may be permitted to say something not only of the white elephant, but of his less-esteemed relatives of a darker complexion.

Elephants are found in great numbers and perfection in Siam and the Laos country at the north. Our missionaries at Cheung Mai, the capital city of the Laos, tell us they not un-

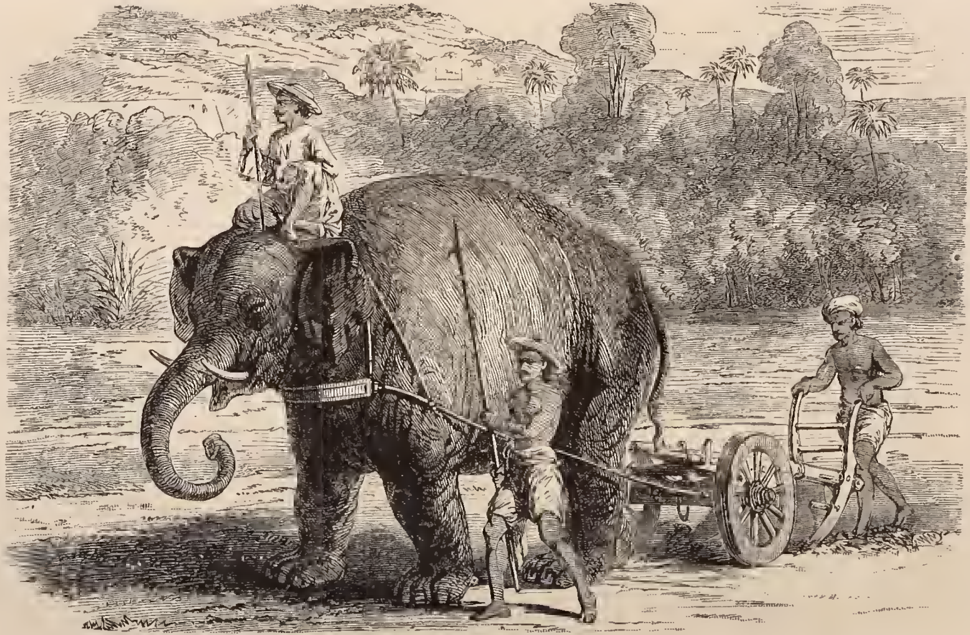


ELEPHANTS AT HOME.

frequently see hundreds pass in a single day, and when a prince leaves home he is accompanied by a train of two or three hundred.

They sometimes attain to the height of ten or eleven feet, but whatever their height may be, it is a fact, which we have often proved by actual measurement, that it never exceeds twice the circumference of the foot. They are very long-lived, sometimes living one hundred and fifty years or more. They are used as beasts of burden and in war, for dragging timber from the forests and for traveling, and their tusks, it is well known, are a valuable article of commerce.

It would be hardly possible for one to make his way through the jungles of Siam without the elephant. He does not put his foot down till he is sure it is safe to do so, and then *you* may feel sure too. He will remove with his trunk interlacing vines, projecting branches of trees and everything that would hinder his progress, and if necessary he will drag himself on knees or belly over a swamp. If he has a stream to cross he will first, with his proboscis, find how deep it is, then move slowly and cautiously till he gets beyond his depth, when he will swim. He will descend into ravines into which men cannot go, and will climb steep mountains. He will travel from four to five miles an hour, and when weary will make known to his driver his wish to rest by striking the ground with his



AN ELEPHANT PLOUGHING.

trunk, making a peculiar and unmistakable noise. A large trunk is considered a mark of great beauty in an elephant, but as he always carries it himself, no one can object to it. The driver is seated astride the neck. The elephant carries his head so steadily that this is the most desirable seat, because there is the least motion. It is the seat of honor for the king, who glories in managing his own beast. The driver always carries with him a large stick, at the end of which is a sharp-pointed iron hook, with which he beats the animal, when unruly, unmercifully over the head and temples till he is subdued.

Elephants are very sagacious animals, and many amusing and interesting stories are told of them. It is said that one of them was once taught to stand at the gate of the king's palace and from a large vessel placed there, filled with rice, take out some with a huge spoon and give to every priest that passed. I cannot vouch for the truth of this, but more wonderful instances of sagacity can be verified. The white elephants in the king's stables in Bangkok have been taught to salute His Majesty by raising their trunks high above their heads.

While I resided in Siam an American friend went with his wife from Bangkok through the wilderness to British Burmah. They traveled nearly two hundred miles, and used some fourteen different elephants, paying about fifty cents a day for each. At night these beasts were turned out to browse among the bamboos, some of the drivers keeping watch. When they were in the jungle bright fires were kept blazing. Awaking one night from a sound sleep, and looking toward the blaze, my friend saw among the outstretched sleeping men one of the huge elephants seated on his haunches warming himself by the fire. He awoke his wife to enjoy with him this strange and amusing sight in the solemn stillness of the tropical forest.

In March of every year a large number of wild elephants are captured at the city of Ayuthia, and from them His Majesty makes selections for his royal stables in Bangkok. For eight or ten weeks hundreds of men are employed to drive them from the forests where they roam, that they may be nearer the city. On the day appointed for their capture a number of tame ones are used to entice them into the enclosure prepared for them, and they seem to take great pleasure and show wonderful sagacity in helping to capture their kindred. They will hem in some two hundred wild ones, and with the help of their drivers and attendants compel them to enter through the gate into the enclosure. Some go in quietly, and others make great resistance. Such as His Majesty fancies are then secured by strong noosed ropes cautiously slipped over their feet and fastened to trees or posts. When thoroughly subdued by hunger or hard blows they are brought down to Bangkok. After a time they become quite reconciled to their new surroundings, and show no disposition to return to their forest home.

Nothing can equal the veneration of the Siamese for the so-called white elephant, though the only really *white* elephant is upon their national flag. Sometimes one is found something the color of a Bath brick (used for cleaning knives) or a little darker, and is so much lighter-colored than usual that it is spoken of as *white;* but most of these are only lighter in patches on shoulders, neck, head and inside of the ears. All over the kingdom, when such an albino is found, there is great rejoicing, and the finder is very handsomely rewarded. They come, as a rule, from the Laos territory to the north.

The country whose king is the fortunate possessor of one or more of these treasures is thought to be greatly blessed, and no amount of money can purchase one. The royal stables of Bangkok are seldom without an occupant. I have several times visited them. Siam should be very prosperous now, as His Majesty has five of these so-called white elephants. They are kept in a long block of buildings at the rear of the arsenal. Each one has an entire stable for his own use, his grooms and attendants sleeping at one end of it. The stable is high and spacious, and at one end is a small image of Buddha with lamps burning in front. Each has a royal title, and there is a handsome sign over the door giving in large gilt letters the full name and title of the inmate. The great beast stands on a handsomely-built pedestal raised about a foot from the floor, with its top just large enough to hold him. He has rings of gold on his tusks, and is fastened by one fore and one hind foot to gilded posts with ropes covered with crimson velvet. These royal captives are fed with bananas, sugar-cane and other dainties, and with small bundles of fresh grass, all carried to them on silver salvers by men on their knees. Every want of these royal beasts is carefully attended to. A recent visitor says: "He stands proudly yet restlessly on his contracted throne, and lashes his trunk and sways his heavy head and tusks around in an imperious, lordly manner, trumpeting now and then until the whole hall trembles with the deafening reverberation. When he is seen to itch in any part of his body his royal hide is promptly scratched with a small iron rake-like instrument with a long handle; his eyes are reverently wiped, and he has a cool sponge-bath every hour or two of day and night during the hot season."

When one of these rare creatures is found in any of the northern provinces the governor of that province sees that he is comfortably escorted through the forest to the river, where he is received on a handsomely-decorated raft of bamboos, placed in a canopy in the centre of the raft, garlanded with flowers and pampered with delicacies. The king, with his whole court in their elegant barges, and myriads of people in boats, with banners and music, go up the river two days' journey to meet him. As all are anxious to share the honor of bringing him down to the city, each boat has a rope attached to the raft, and shouts of joy fill the air as he progresses. On arriving, a pavilion in the palace-grounds is ready to receive him, a title is given him and slaves appointed to care for him. A public festival of a week's continuance is appointed; priests of the highest grade chant prayers in his presence daily. When sick he is attended by the wisest of the court physicians; the priests wait upon him, sprinkle him with consecrated water and pray for his recovery. If he dies there is universal mourning, and funeral honors are paid to his remains.

One day a strange procession passed down the river in front of our house in Bangkok. There were eight large barges, six of them with curtains of crimson and gold cloth, each manned by about thirty boatmen dressed in red trousers, jackets and caps. They had a brass band, which made very mournful music, for it was a funeral occasion. The first impression was that some personage eminent for rank was being borne to sepulture; but no, this procession was simply doing honor to the dead body of a light-colored elephant.

The third and fourth boats had no gay curtains, but they had the five-storied umbrellas which denote great rank, and between these two boats the corpse was fastened and floated in the water. There was a canopy of white cloth over it to protect it from the sun. Phya is a title given to a high order of nobility in Siam, and this distinguished elephant was named Phya Sawate. It was so highly esteemed that more than two hundred men escorted it to its last resting-place.

Now, why such parade and ceremony? For the strange reason that the Siamese, with all other Buddhists, believe that at death their spirits pass into the body of some man or animal, of more or less importance according to the amount of merit made while living, and that they may be thus born thousands of times. If they find an elephant of a lighter complexion than usual, they think the spirit of some distinguished person dwells in it—possibly, that of some future Buddha, sure to bring a blessing on the country which possesses so great a treasure.

We hope that the day will soon come when Christianity will supplant Buddhism, and the Siamese be wise enough to prize the elephant only for what it can do in the service of man.

RECEPTION OF A WHITE ELEPHANT AT THE COURT OF SIAM.

A few years ago two Siamese peasants of the up-country, far to the north, were ordered by the governor of the province to go out into the jungle and hunt for a white elephant. The "Stones," or astrologers, having prophesied that the present reign would be especially lucky, and that several of these spotted or albino elephants would be caught, constant vigilance had been enjoined on all the provincial officials of these regions, and large royal bounty was promised to the finders of such a prize.

Accordingly, leaving their homes and families, these poor men went out to live in the malarious jungle, wandering hither and thither for many weary weeks in vain, by day forcing their way through the rank undergrowth, anxiously following the tracks of the wild elephants up and down the streams, living on the fruit that grew on trees unplanted by man and the fish in the mountain-lakes; at night bivouacking under the stars, each in turn watching while the other slept to keep up the great fire built to protect their resting-spot from the fierce animals prowling about under the cover of darkness. Thus day after day and week after week they sought for the coveted white elephant which should ensure to those who found him the richest reward.

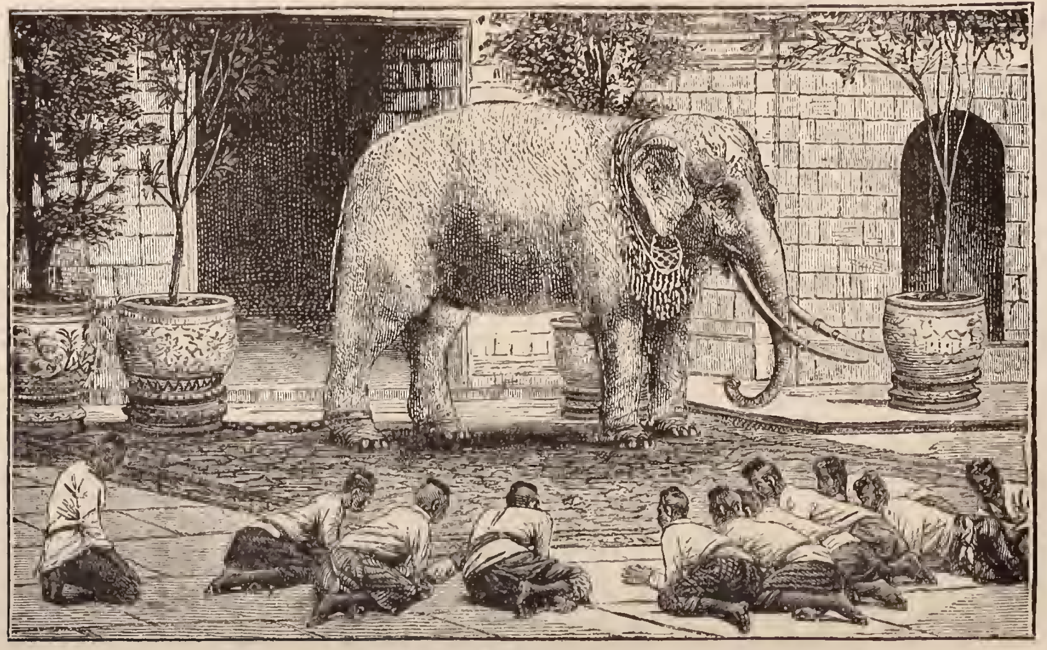
At length, on the very point of giving up their search in despair, they had turned their faces homeward, when all of a sudden a small, beautifully-formed elephant was seen at a distance, drinking. He was all muddy and dirty, and at first sight appeared darker than the ordinary color of this animal. But some peculiarity in the skin aroused hope. "Let us creep nearer and trap him," they whispered. This was an easy task to such skilled native hunters. The iris of the eye, the color of which is held to be a good test of an albino, encouraged their faint expectation; it was a pale Neapolitan yellow.

One of them said, "We will take him home and give him a wash." This was done, and to their great joy the whole body proved to be of a pale Bath-brick color, with a few real white hairs on the back. There could be no longer room for doubt; they had truly captured one of the world-renowned white elephants. Indeed, competent experts pronounced it to be the "fairest" ever caught within living memory. The ears and tail were beautiful; the hair, the nails, the eyes, all were indicative of the very highest family. He proved a pure albino, so-called "white."

The whole kingdom was thrown into a state of the wildest excitement as the news spread east and west, north and south. Swift runners carried the glad tidings from hamlet to hamlet. "A white elephant has been captured!" was in every mouth. A fleet messenger bore the official document with the formal announcement down the river to Bangkok. The king loaded his ears with gold. Each person in any way connected with this great capture received some token of royal favor. The governor of the province was made a phya; the poor finders were loaded with honors and emoluments, at one step taking their places among the nobles of the kingdom and receiving royal gifts and grants of land. His Excellency the governor of one of the other provinces was despatched with a suite of high officials and attendants skilled in the management of elephants to escort this latest addition to the royal stables.

The date fixed for the actual reception of the royal stranger at the capital was June 21st, and will long remain a red-letter day in the Siamese annals. His Majesty, with his entire royal retinue, went up the river sixty miles to Ayuthia, the ancient capital of Siam, some days in advance, to meet the illustrious captive regarded as a palladium for his own life and the prosperity of the empire. In magnificently-adorned barges, escorting the noble beast to the capital with great parade, music and rejoicings, the brilliant procession returned.

Very early in the day the whole city was astir. The most intense excitement prevailed. It was a great fête occasion. Old and young in holiday garb thronged the verandas of the floating houses



THE WHITE ELEPHANT.

in Bangkok. Crowds of country-folk from miles around flocked to the river, filling the wat-grounds or crouching on their haunches along the banks, waiting patiently for hours to catch a passing glimpse of the new white elephant.

The deep, wide river reflected the brilliancy of the blue sky overhead and the innumerable barges and boats gayly decorated with bunting; flags fluttered and gilt pagoda-spires glittered in the tropical sunlight above the mass of foliage and monotonous sloping roofs on either shore.

Near the palace-grounds, as the time drew near for the procession to approach, there was much running to and fro,—officials on horseback galloping about, soldiers and marines in European uniforms drawn up along the sides of the road, many carrying streamers or flags. Several huge elephants in magnificent trappings, each bearing on his back a richly-ornamented howdah and guided by a gayly-dressed *carnac*, or driver, were brought down to the landing-place to meet the royal procession. Near the bank stood a group of priests and white-robed Brahmans with tall cone-shaped hats ornamented with broad gold bands. Princes in full state uniforms were carried in litters, preceded and followed by attendants bearing their insignia of official or social rank—rods, seals, huge gilt umbrellas, betel-boxes, teapots, water-goblets and all the ordinary trappings of the Siamese grandee when he takes his walks or drives abroad.

The national air, played by a brass band, heralded the approach of the "conquering hero;" Siamese musicians performed with more noise than musical effect on tomtoms, conch-shells and other native instruments; heralds and chamberlains of the king's body-guard preceded His Majesty, seated cross-legged in a richly-inlaid chair, beneath the huge royal umbrella. He wore a white India helmet, and numerous jeweled orders adorned the breast of his crimson-and-gold coat. Pages followed with gold betel-boxes and other costly articles. The highest grandees of the kingdom brought up the rear.

A temporary stable had been erected for this illustrious albino pachyderm just outside the palace-grounds. He was mounted on a platform, and his hind leg was attached by a rope to a white post. Here, after numerous washings by pouring over him tamarind-water to cleanse away all possible impurities, the new elephant was publicly baptized and received official title as a grandee of Siam; after which a high priest fed him with a piece of sugar-cane on which was written his new title in full: Phra Sawet Sakoula Warophat, etc., etc., this title including a long description of the great dignity, beauty, virtues and priceless value of the royal animal. He was then brought into the palace precincts and assigned a royal stable and numerous attendants, who serve him with the respect shown to royalty itself, and generally approach to feed and groom him on their hands and knees.

A recent visitor to Bangkok thus describes him in his present home: "One only of their number, the fifth and last one obtained, is of a faint brick-red over his entire body, which gives him an odd and not altogether unpleasant appearance. He is, moreover, young, lively and good-natured, and salaams by raising his trunk straight and high above his head to all well-dressed visitors in a way which quite scandalizes his keepers, who have taught all the others to reserve that salute solely for the king. Were he not himself too royal to be whipped, I dare say that this merry pachyderm might soon be taught to recognize the honor reserved to royalists. Time was when these beasts were duly worshiped by king and people; their stables were palaces; they were fed from golden dishes, and wore heavy gold rings upon their tusks and were fettered with golden chains. Even now the populace fall with their heads to the ground as they are led out richly caparisoned on state occasions, while the royal officers, and even the king himself, always make them obeisance in passing."

CHAPTER VI.

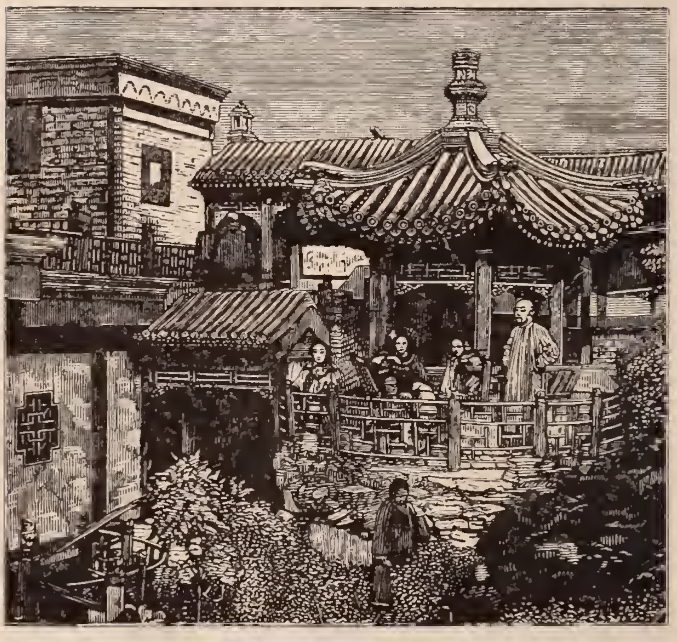
THE CHINESE IN SIAM.

THE Chinese have been in Siam since time immemorial, and have increased, until now the Siamese say that more than half the population is Chinese.

There is no census taken in this country, and even the government has no positive means of knowing the number of inhabitants. But we may safely suppose the above statement to be true. The deck of every steamer and sailing craft from China is swarming with these ubiquitous Celestials. In the year 1767 the Burmese invaded Siam, sacked Ayuthia, the old capital, and carried away many captives. Prya-Tahksin, a Siamo-Chinese, rallied the Siamese forces, defeated the Burmese and drove them out of the country. He took the throne, fortified the town of Bangkok and made it the capital. He reigned fifteen years, and was then defeated by Somdet Pra Baroma Rahchah Pra Pretta Yaut Fah, who was the first king of the present dynasty, Prabat Somdet Pra Paramendr-Maha-Chula-Long-

Korn-Klow, the present sovereign, being the fifth.

Chinese of wealth often become favorites with the rulers and receive titles of nobility, and these noblemen in return present their daughters to their majesties. Thus we find Chinese blood flowing in the veins of the royal family of Siam.



HOME OF RICH CHINAMAN.

Although a Chinaman may have left a wife in his native land, that does not prevent his taking as many others as he can support. The first Siamese wife is supreme, and rules the manysided household without opposition. Intermarriage with the different tribes found in Siam does not change to any extent their native characteristics. The children inherit the same peculiar traits of character. They have the same almond-shaped eyes and copper complexion, cultivate their hair in queue style, and wear the same fashion of dress which their Chinese ancestors wore centuries ago.

The Chinese element in Siam is a powerful one. No other race can compete with it, not even excepting the Caucasian. We find the Chinese in every department of business. They are extensive ship-owners. In the days when Siam had a sailing fleet of merchantmen the owners were principally Chinese, as were also the shippers and crews. Even when commanded by a European captain, the supercargo on board was a Chinaman and had chief control.

Since steamships have been introduced we find that the owners and agents of some of these are Chinamen. The saw-mills and rice-mills worked by muscle-power are all owned by Chinese, and since the introduction of steam-mills they are not slow to adopt these modern improvements, so that now several steam saw-mills and rice-mills are owned by enterprising Chinamen. When business was dull and Europeans stopped their mills, the Chinese kept theirs running. One reason for this is that the Chinese can live more cheaply than Europeans, and are satisfied with smaller profits.

They are our gardeners, shopkeepers, carpenters, bricklayers, tailors, sailors, shoemakers, blacksmiths, fishermen and washermen. All the mills employ Chinese coolies; all cargo-boats for loading and unloading ships are manned by these coolies. Europeans prefer the Chinese for servants: they are cleanly and quick to learn, frugal in their habits, utilizing everything. In the possession of all these traits they stand alone amidst surrounding tribes.

But the curse of opium-smoking and *shamshu*-drinking has followed them to this sunny land, and makes shipwreck of many thousands of lives annually. When they once become addicted to the use of opium they neglect their business and families and spend every cent they can find or steal for the poisonous drug, and finally, in a crazed state, their bodies mere skeletons, they lie down and die or put an end to their own lives.

Change of climate, scene and associations has no appreciable effect on the disposition of a Chinaman. He still retains his acquisitive, irascible and turbulent temperament. The Chinese herd together in little rooms, perhaps a score of them eating, working and sleeping in one little room in which a white man would die of suffocation. They are very clannish too, the natives of each province holding together and working to promote the interests of their own particular clan. They have frequent quarrels with the natives of other provinces.

Some time ago there was quite a serious quarrel between certain clans. The trouble is said to have originated with the Ang Yees, a secret society. They resorted to knives and firearms, and a number were killed. The government took the matter up and decapitated several of them, which put a quietus upon the others for the time.

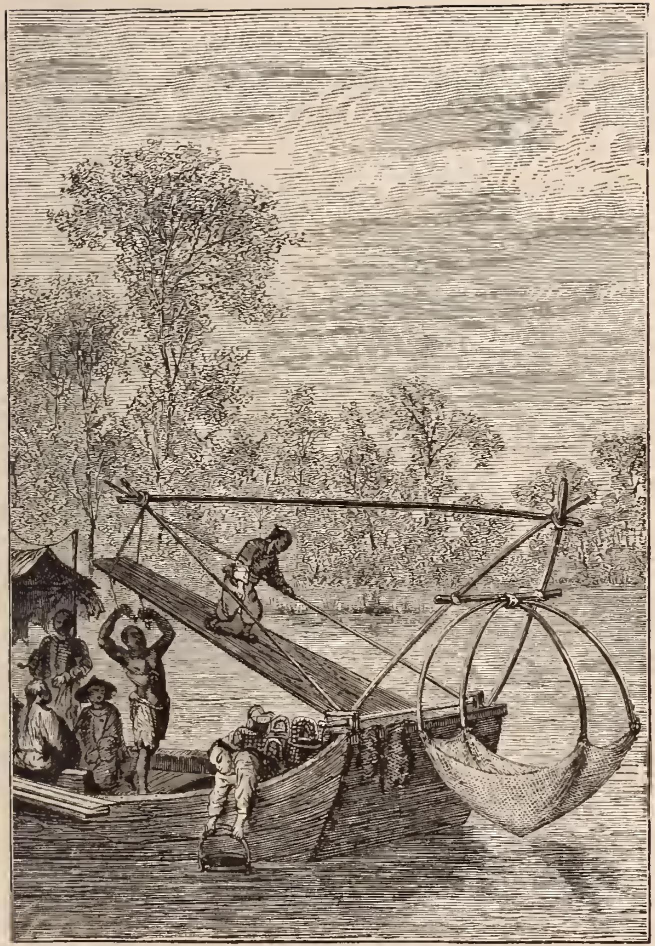
The Chinese are very daring. There are organized bands of robbers, who go up and down the river robbing boats and breaking into native houses, and committing murder in some cases where resistance is offered. One house in the very shadow of the palace was entered and a large sum of money taken. The ringleaders were caught and beheaded, and the people are now feeling more secure in life and property.

The Chinese are inveterate gamblers. Much of the hard-earned wages of the laboring classes is lost in the gambling dens. The gambling establishments are all in the hands of the Chinese. Gambling, like many other things in Siam, is a monopoly, and the government sells to the highest bidder the privilege of licensing and controlling all such establishments in the country. He has the right to arrest and punish all those who infringe upon his privileges. Men, women and little children all frequent the gambling-places.

Cards and dice are both used. The lottery monopoly is also in the hands of the Chinese.

Every Chinaman must pay a triennial poll-tax of two dollars and seventy-five cents. As a proof that this tax has been paid they must wear a cord around the wrist fastened with the gum of a certain tree and stamped with the government seal. A great many try to evade this law by keeping in retirement until the time for taxation is passed. The Siamese captives are liable at any time to be called upon to do government work, and to escape it they sometimes wear the queue. A lad on our premises who had worn the queue for years decided to have it cut off, and when asked why he did so replied, "I hear the Siamese are requiring every one wearing the queue to give in the Chinese language the different parts of a pig; as I could not do that, I had my queue cut off." If the story is true, it was a happy thought of the Siamese. The Chinese are the pork-raisers of Siam, and could easily meet the test.

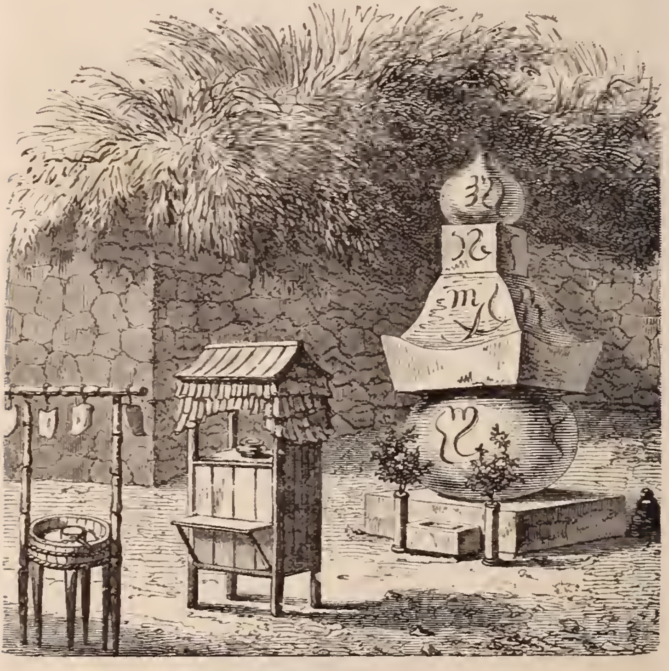
Most of the villages on the gulf coast are inhabited by Chinese fishermen. Those living near the mouth of the Menam Chowphya bring the products of the sea to the Bangkok market at all seasons of the year, whilst those on the opposite side must consult the winds and tides. Everything, from a sea-slug to a porpoise, is caught and sold in the market. As their fish-boats have to travel at least thirty miles, it is necessary to make



CHINESE BOAT-PEOPLE.

an early start, and in order to arrive here for the morning market they most probably toil all night.

Most of the Chinese who die here are buried, but some are cremated. The disposition of the body rests altogether with the wife and children



CHINESE CEMETERY.

of the deceased. Very many, however, return to their native land, after amassing a good pile of Mexican dollars, to lay their bones in the ancestral burying-ground, where their spirits may be worshiped in turn by their descendants.

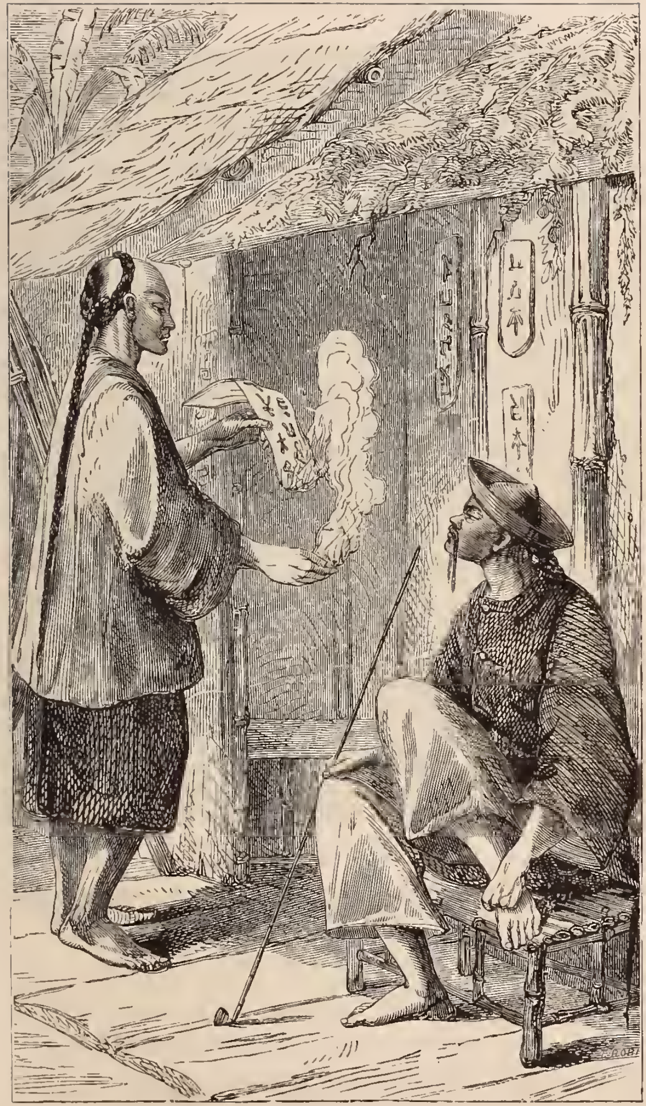
Although the different provinces in China have their own peculiar superstitions and customs, yet when they come here they assimilate to a certain degree. Every three or four years some person turns up who claims that the spirit of their god has entered into him, and he is put through the crucial test of sitting on iron spikes and sharp swords, having needles thrust into his cheeks and his tongue cut. That one who can obtain an inscription written with the blood from the tongue is considered highly favored. If he can endure all this torture unflinchingly, his claim is considered genuine. They then prepare for a grand procession by land or water. If on the river, the god is seated on a throne in a gayly-decorated boat, accompanied by a long line of boats with flags, banners and streamers flying and gongs beating. The Chinese love dearly to "strike the loud cymbal." These occasions are to Young China what the Fourth of July is to Young America, a time of fire-crackers and deafening noises. The more grotesquely the occupants of the boats are dressed the more imposing the ceremony.

The wealthy classes build very pleasant, comfortable brick houses. The walls of the verandas are decorated with flowering plants and shrubbery placed in fancy Chinese flower-pots. The indispensable Chinese lantern is suspended from the roof of the veranda. In the interior of the house you will find the shrine of the household god, and over it is placed a number of fancy-colored and gilt papers containing inscriptions, perhaps the daily petitions or prayers of the household.

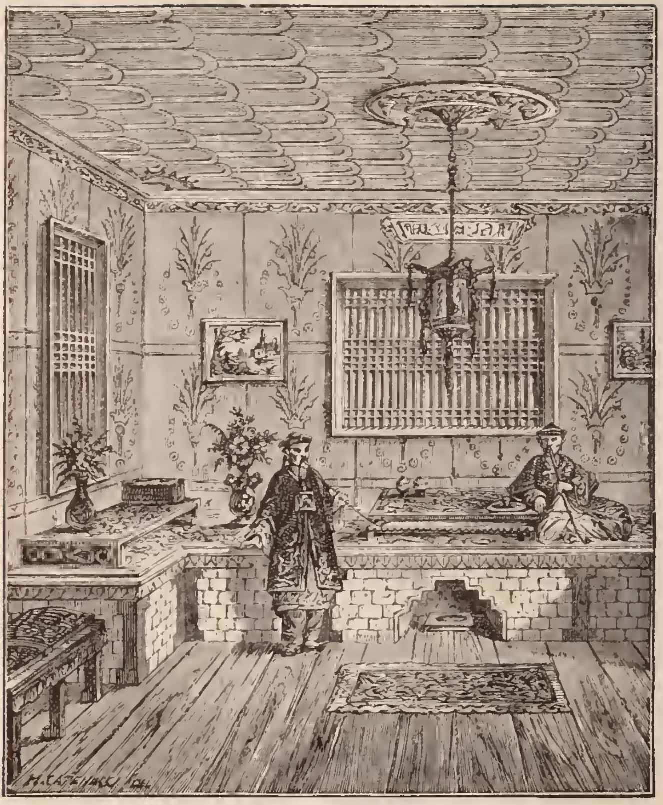
The Chinese are a religious people, every house having its altar. But "their rock is not as our Rock, themselves being judges." At sundown they will burn gilt paper and incense-sticks to Joss, and turn in the midst of their devotions and curse a European, calling him a "white devil." We have been accustomed from childhood to think of the "father of lies" as a very black spirit, and it seems very strange to us to have these dusky faces call him *white.*

The furniture of some of these houses is very handsome. The same black, straight-backed settees and chairs seen everywhere in China are here, some of them handsomely inlaid with ivory, mother-of-pearl and fine porcelain.

The Chinese are a polite people too. If you visit them in their homes, and they have been accustomed to mingle with Europeans, they will offer you their hand or will chin-chin, bowing very low and shaking their own hands. You are invited to sit down, and a cup of excellent tea in its purity is offered in the daintiest of cups. One is tempted to covet some of those beautiful table-covers, screens or fans, all so richly embroidered in bright-colored silks. Some of the fans are



PAPER PRAYERS.


H. CATENACCI del.

PARLOR OF CHINESE HOUSE.

white silk, with birds and flowers painted on them.

> "But small the bliss that sense alone bestows,
> And sensual bliss is all the nation knows;
> In florid beauty groves and fields appear:
> Man seems the only growth that dwindles here."

In the cool of the evening the working classes gather in groups round the doors of their houses, talking, laughing and smoking. One of the number is perhaps entertaining the others with music on a little instrument resembling a violin. But there is no music in it. If the reader would like to reproduce the sound, let him try drawing the bow over the violin-strings back and forth in a seesaw manner for an hour or two at a time, and he will have a faint idea of the distracting sounds drawn from the tortured instrument. There is not the slightest approach to melody.

The scantily-clad coolie is not æsthetic, but as a nation the Chinese are very much so. If they have the means they surround themselves with beautiful things, such as silk, embroideries, paintings, carving in ivory, lacquer-ware, mosaics, birds and flowers. Their ladies paint their faces to look beautiful. But these stay in their native land; a Chinese woman is rarely seen in Siam.

See that group of Chinamen who have been invited to a party given by the foreign minister on the king's birthday. They walk up and down through the drawing-room and halls, so that we have a fine opportunity for seeing them in full dress. Thin loose trousers of blue silk, almost concealed by a robe of elegant silk richly embroidered, a cape of the same covering the shoulders; Chinese slippers embroidered and turned up at the toes; a hat (which they wear all the evening) resembling a butter-bowl; and, to complete the grand toilette, they flourish exquisite fans in silk and ivory. They make frequent visits to the refreshment-room, and seem to enjoy the good things provided.

Many of those coming here from China cannot swim a stroke, and yet they will venture out on the river in a little boat, perhaps a leaky *sampan,* which they do not know how to manage, or they will crowd into a larger boat until it is weighed down to the water's edge, scarcely leaving room to use the paddles. In this condition they will attempt to cross the river when it is very rough and dangerous. Perhaps they will reach the opposite shore safely, or, becoming excited, they lose all presence of mind, and, screaming and shouting at one another, completely demoralized, they are carried by the swiftly-flowing current upon the anchor-chain of some vessel lying in the river; the boat is upset and they are left struggling in deep water. Some of them may succeed in getting hold of the chain or rope and cling to it until rescued, whilst others are carried under the ship by the strong current, and are never again seen alive. Like most heathen, they are fatalists, and it would seem sometimes as if they sought death, from their persistently reckless manner when danger threatens them. They will run their little boats across the bow of large boats, even steamers, and, as they are probably moving with the current, a collision is almost inevitable. It is no unusual thing to see the bodies of Chinamen floating up and down at the mercy of the ebbing and flowing tides, until finally they reach the sea and disappear for ever

There is a superstition that if you rescue any one from drowning the water-spirits will resent the interference and claim at some future time the rescuer as a substitute; hence the stolidity and indifference in Siam about rescuing the drowning. New missionaries are always startled to see a boatload of people upset in the river, and shocked that none of the people in the other boats attempt to offer any assistance.

As gardeners the Chinese are very successful, and when we consider the few rude implements they have to work with it is wonderful that they succeed so well. Their spade is not much larger than a man's hand, with a short straight handle —no head to hold by nor rest for the foot; consequently, all the force used in digging must come from the shoulders and arms. The sickle is similar to that used in many parts of Europe at the present day; the plough, drawn by oxen, does not differ perhaps in any respect from the one the prophet Elisha left to follow Elijah.

The Chinese do not cultivate the paddy-fields to any great extent, but buy the rice from the producers and bring it to the Bangkok market. The *seri*-leaf, which is used so extensively in Siam, is cultivated in the betel-gardens. It is a vine trained on poles, and the leaf, which is a bright green, tender and juicy, resembles the leaf of the morning-glory vine, and is cultivated with great care. Decayed fish is used as a fertilizer, and consequently the breezes which blow over these gardens are not "spicy breezes," but, on the contrary, very offensive, obliging one in passing to suspend respiration for a time. The leaves are picked when young and tied up in bundles, and carried round for sale in little boats. This leaf, covered with a pink lime paste and a little tobacco and betel-nut added, is rolled up crosswise and chewed. The consequence is, their teeth are black as coal and the mouth is always full of red saliva, which runs out of the mouth over the chin, and is almost as disgusting as the practice of tobacco-chewing amongst Americans.

The Presbyterians have done no special work amongst the Chinese proper in Siam. There are a number of elderly Chinamen in the mission churches, but many of the male members are Siamo-Chinese. In the mission boarding-school for boys more than half the number are sons of Chinamen, and they are the brightest and most encouraging pupils. Many of the missionaries hold the opinion that China proper is the legitimate field in which to teach Christianity to the Chinese. It is very difficult to get educated Chinese teachers in Siam.

The Rev. Wm. Dean, D. D., was the first missionary to the Chinese in Siam. He was sent out by the Baptist Association, and arrived in Bangkok July 18, 1835. This venerable father, now in his seventy-seventh year, is still doing active service for the Master in this part of his vineyard. He stood alone for many years, but recently he has been reinforced by the arrival of the Rev. L. A. Eaton.

The Chinese all learn enough of the Siamese language to make themselves understood, and they can get a saving knowledge of the truth through the medium of the Siamese language if their hearts are so inclined. Already both Siamese and Chinese in Siam are accepting the gospel, so that we see the dawn of that glorious time promised when "the heathen" will "be given as an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession" to Christ.

PART II.

VARIETIES OF SIAMESE LIFE.

CHAPTER VII.

A SIAMESE WEDDING.

IN a Siamese home, which stood in the midst of most beautiful fruit-gardens, where the rosy-cheeked pomegranate nodded and played hide-and-seek among its leaves with the purple mangosteen, and the fragrant blossoms of the luscious mango pelted and showered themselves down upon the thorny durian, and the tall cocoanut frowned loftily on the graceful waving leaves of the banana,—in such a lovely spot, amidst singing birds and fragrant flowers and most glorious sunshine, about twenty years ago a little baby girl was born.

When the dear little stranger first opened her eyes she saw only gloom and smoke. A Siamese infant is not carefully bathed by gentle hands, and dressed in softest, purest linen, and laid in the clean white bed beside the mother, who gathers it close in her arms and thanks God for such a treasure. No; this new-born babe was first well rubbed with a red and yellow powder, and strings with a silver coin attached were tied around her wrists and ankles; then, being wrapped in some pieces of their dirty, worn-out waist-cloths, she was put on a cotton pillow under a round framework, something the shape of a bird-cage, covered with dark muslin. Baby and cage were then set away in a corner of the hot, close room, where the mother, as Siamese custom requires, was lying on a bare board before four or five smoking firebrands, and, as the house had no chimney, of course the room was filled with smoke. The little brown baby was looked at occasionally, and brought to the mother to be nursed, and she was bathed once or twice a day by having tepid water poured over her with the hands, and whilst the skin was still wet rubbed over with the turmeric powder and softened chalk. She was also fed with the fingers, the food being boiled rice mixed with mashed bananas.

What would you think to see a baby not a week old put into a smoke-house and fed on rice and scraped apple? Well, as might be expected, many of these little brown babies die. Nevertheless, this little one lived through all, and as the days and months and years went by grew up into a pretty little girl, and, being the youngest of the children, was petted by all the family like many a winsome darling in our own Christian land.

I do not know much about the earliest years of Leang, save that she lived most of the day out of doors among the flowers and fruit trees; and I think she must have had the birds for her companions, for her merry laugh always reminded one of their carols. When I first met Leang she was a bright child of six or seven summers, for the year in Siam is one long bright summer. She had soft black eyes, and hair that was black also, but all shaven off except one little place on the top of her head, where it had been allowed to grow long, and was worn twisted into a tight, smooth knot fastened by a long gold pin, the head of which was as large as the end of your thumb and set full of precious stones.

She was very friendly, and often visited at the house of one of our missionaries who lived near her bamboo hut, and when Mrs. House started a school for children on her veranda Leang was invited to join them. Here she learned to sing, read, write and sew. In later years she joined the church, and was often in our family and much loved for her winning ways.

When Leang was about seventeen years old her parents thought it time for the maiden to be married. In Siam when a man wants a wife he gets two or three elderly persons who are friends of the maiden's parents to intercede for him and offer a certain sum of money for her, and often, whether she is willing or not, the daughter is married to the one who will pay the highest price.

Leang's parents received an offer from a wealthy Chinaman who had already two or more wives, but, attracted by her pretty face, wanted this young girl—not because he loved her, but to add a new ornament to his harem. He was a heathen, much older than herself, and the girl's heart had long been in the keeping of a young Siamese Christian who had met her in the mission-house, where he also visited. Her parents scolded, took away her ornaments, beat her and threatened banishment from home, but Leang refused to marry the Chinaman. At length, after a long period of trial and waiting, which perhaps only strengthened their love, the young Siamese won the reluctant consent of her parents to marry their daughter.

And now perhaps you think it is time to prepare for the wedding. No, not yet. The Siamese have a superstition that persons born in certain years are incompatible with each other. For instance, if one were born in the "year of the Dog" and another in the "year of the Rat," or one in the "year of the Cow" and the other in the "year of the Tiger," they would not live happily together. The matter is accordingly referred to some fortune-teller, who for a small fee generally pronounces no difficulty is in the way. The matter of birthdays being settled favorably, the elders make another call for a further discussion of the preliminaries. They say, "Since birthdays do not interfere, what shall be said about the usual stock for the young couple to commence life upon, and the money for the building of a house?" for, according to Siamese custom, the bridegroom puts up the house on the premises of the bride's parents, and as near the old home as possible, so that it is almost one family. When a Siamese has several daughters married and gathered thus around the old homestead, there is quite a little family settlement. In reply to this inquiry of the elders the girl's parents will probably answer, "We are not rich and not able to give our daughter much of a dowry. How is it with the parents of the young man? What will they do for their son?" The elders reply, "It depends upon yourselves." The parents then suggest that a certain sum be appropriated for the building of the house, and name another sum for mutual trade; and it is agreed that they contribute areca-nut, red lime, seri-leaf, cakes and so forth for the wedding-feast. The plan of the new house and the number of the rooms are also specified.

The elders then return and report to the parents of the young man, and if they are satisfied a bargain is made and accepted by both parties.

All these matters being favorably settled in the case of our young people, Leang's parents hastened to consult the astrologers in reference to a propitious day for the wedding, and the young man engaged workmen to build the house, which did not take long nor cost much.

During all these months the lovers seldom met. For the Siamese young men and maidens there are no moonlight drives and walks, no pleasant tête-à-têtes, no exchange of love's sweetest tokens, during courtship. They are carefully watched, and kept apart as much as possible. But by some of the thousand ways in which love ever makes itself known they knew that each was true to the other, and waited patiently. Meanwhile the bamboo house grew in the hands of the workmen day by day, until the sound of the saw and hammer was no longer heard, and the home was pronounced finished and ready to be set in order for the young couple.

The wedding-day hastened on; the guests were all invited, and the birds twittering among the trees seemed to sympathize with the maiden who had lived among them from her earliest childhood, and to carol joyously, "Come, haste to the wedding."

The little house was festooned with the broad, graceful leaves of the banana and adorned with the tall green stalks of the sugar-cane, symbolical of peace and fruitfulness. Flowers and fruits were arranged in fantastic designs on the walls, bright-colored cloth was gracefully draped as curtains and screens; all things were ready and attractive in the new home.

The ceremonies of a Siamese wedding consist largely of feasting. This feast of fruits and cakes and sweetmeats is spread on mats upon the grass among the trees and flowers, and the hosts await the arrival of the guests.

By and by the sound of tabret and pipe and bands of music heralds the coming of a sort of procession. As the Siamese always walk in single file, one by one they came—the musicians with their oddly-shaped instruments, old men and women, young men, maidens and children—all gayly dressed in holiday attire, some bearing trays containing gifts for the bride and her parents, and others with offerings of fruit, cakes and confections to contribute to the already generously prepared wedding-feast in the fruit-garden.

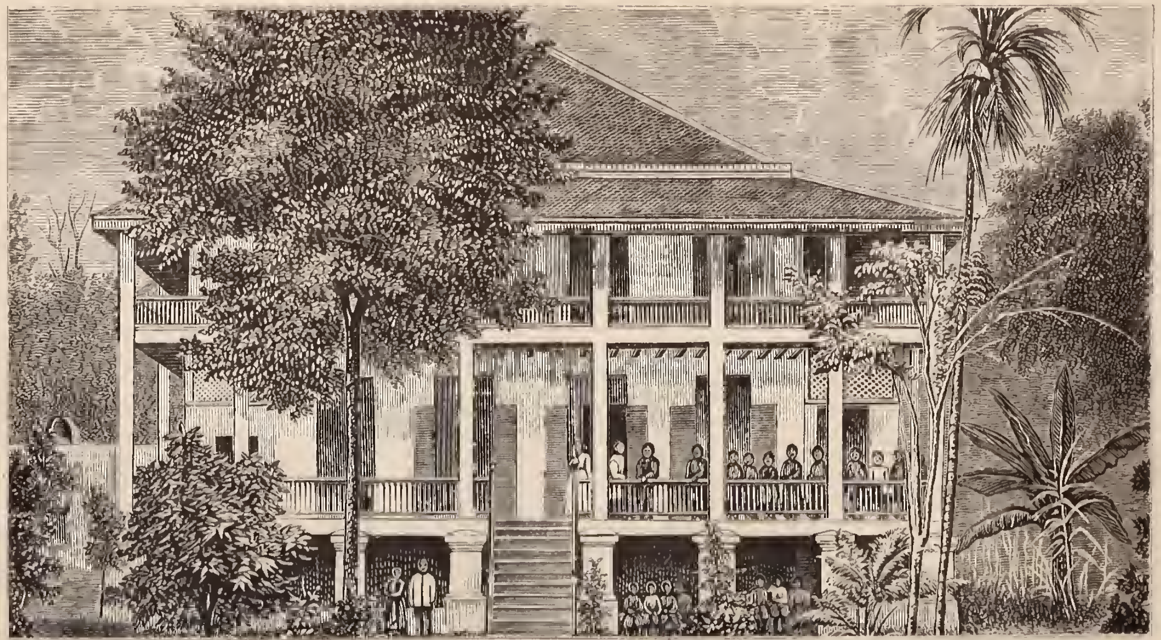
Out among her youthful friends, serving at the feast and bearing trays here and there among the guests—who are seated in groups on the grass, like the multitude fed by our Lord in Judea so long ago—flits the pretty bride. Although her face is brown, the rosy blush is plainly seen on her cheeks as she finds the eyes of her lover seeking constantly her own.

The bridegroom sits apart from the women, among his young men attendants, and has not been near enough to extend a tender pressure of the hand, nor would he dare to offend the Siamese ideas of propriety, for, although she is so nearly his own, a slight breach of etiquette on his part might blast his hopes.

Conversation flows on, the sound of merry voices telling of happiness and good-will. All have been served, and the feast is over. The money has been brought forward and counted by reliable persons and found correct. Both sums are then thrown together and sprinkled with rice, scented oil and flowers, symbolic of blessings craved for the young couple. It is then handed over to the parents of the bride for safe-keeping.

The wedding-gifts have been formally presented and duly admired. Siamese wedding-gifts are few and simple. Many of the utensils in use among them are quite primitive in style —unglazed earthen pots for cooking purposes; brazen vessels, trays, cups and spoons or small ladles; heavy wooden buckets and baskets daubed within and without with pitch, used for carrying water; common porcelain bowls for holding their rice and vegetables at meals,—no knives, no forks, no spoons, such as young housekeepers need with us. As they have little that is ornamental in an ordinary home, the wedding-gifts are always useful articles.

The afternoon is now far spent and the hum of many voices is somewhat subdued. The band strikes up a sort of wedding-march. The groom, attired in plum-colored silk p'anoong and a neatly-fitting white muslin jacket, rises, and, leaving the group, attended by his young friends, dressed in the same style, bare-legged and bare-headed, walks toward the neighboring house of the American missionary. At a respectful distance follow some of the matrons, aged women and maidens. Amid them, like a gay butterfly, dressed in a red and yellow silk waist-cloth, a brilliant green silk, tight-fitting jacket and a fire-colored silk scarf thrown gracefully over her shoulders, walks the young bride—no shoes or stockings, no hat nor veil to hide her pretty blushes. The guests all go up through the veranda into the house, where they are welcomed by the missionary. Chairs are offered, but many prefer to crouch on the floor, as they have never been elevated above it in all their lives. The Christian marriage that follows is a novel episode to many present. At a Siamese wedding the Buddhist priests come to the house and chant prayers for the benefit of the young couple. The parents of the bride and bridegroom and all the guests vie with each other in their attention to these priests, who receive gifts also. The young couple are copiously bathed with holy water, poured by the elders first on



MISSION HOUSE.

the head of the bridegroom, then on the head of the bride, pronouncing a blessing upon each. This of course necessitates a change of wet apparel for dry, usually more gay than the former, the fresh suit for the bridegroom being frequently presented him on a salver by a lad sent from the parents of the bride.

But to return to our young couple. After repeating with clasped hands their vows to love, cherish, honor and live with one another until death, the missionary pronounces the blessing and congratulations are offered by their friends. The parties then separate, and in like manner as they came to the house so they go back to their guests in the garden.

The feasting continues if this is a propitious day, closing in the evening. Oftentimes, however, the ceremonies are kept up until the third and fourth day. Soft eyes look love to eyes which dare not speak again, for the Siamese dames and grandames are lynx-eyed and the maidens are shy; yet Cupid will not be outwitted, and his darts fly thick and fast at such a feast. Still, the bridegroom must content himself with an occasional glance as Leang flits in and out among her guests. When the twilight has waned and the full clear moon transforms everything into silvery beauty, preparations are made for the torchlight procession to conduct the bridegroom and bride to the new home. You remember the parable of the Ten Virgins in the New Testament: "At midnight there was a cry made, Behold the bridegroom cometh!" After somewhat the same manner is this procession formed. The torches used are made of pitch rolled into small sticks about two feet long and wrapped round with the dried attap-leaf.

The groom's attendants escort him with lighted torches to his new home, and at the same time a lad is despatched by the bride bearing a tray of the areca-nut, with all its concomitants, ready for chewing, tobacco, seri-leaf, red lime and soft wax for the lips. The happy man meets them at the door, and, placing the tray before them, invites them to partake.

After an interval two or three matrons, with Leang's maiden attendants, light their torches, and the little bride, shy and trembling, but with her heart full of her happiness, is in her turn escorted to the little home, where the youthful husband, engaged in merry conversation with his friends, is impatiently awaiting her arrival.

All sit down in the veranda, the maidens apart from the men. The tray with the betel-nut is passed to them, and they all partake freely. Then, after more friendly chatting and some suitable exhortations from the matrons and the congratulations from all, the guests depart. Our youthful friends are left to themselves, and another Christian home adds its rays to the light which we hope will ere long cover Siam.

Many Siamese men have several wives at a time, but they do not marry all in the same way. They pay a sum of money for each, but often all ceremony is laid aside after the first marriage, save paying the money. They build a little house for each, or assign her a small suite of rooms in the mansion, if men of wealth and position. Polygamy is not so common among the lower as among the higher classes, because of inability to support more than one wife at a time; but a wife can be put away or left at will. Notwithstanding these evils, I have known many homes among the Siamese where the "heart of the husband safely trusted in the wife," and she, with loving confidence in him, "looked well to the ways of her household."

CHAPTER VIII.

HOUSEKEEPING IN SIAM.

ALL ordinary Siamese houses must have three rooms. Indeed, so important is this considered that the suitor must often promise to furnish the requisite number before the parents will consent to let him claim his bride.

There is the bedroom, where the family all huddle together at night; an outer room, where they sit through the day and where they receive visitors; and the kitchen.

I will begin at the latter and try to describe the dirty, dingy place. The Siamese have no godliness, and the next thing to it, cleanliness, is entirely lacking. So please step carefully or you may soil your clothes against a black rice-pot or come in contact with drying fish.

There is usually a rude box filled with earth where they build the fire and do what they call the cooking; that is, they boil rice and make curry and roast fish and plantains over the coals. All in the household are taught to do these simple things, and the father and the brothers, if they are at home, in poor families, where the women work for the living, are just as apt to get them ready as the women.

There is no making of bread or pie or cake or pudding—no roast, no gravies, no soups. Even vegetables are seldom cooked at home, but are prepared by others and sold in the markets or peddled about the streets. There they buy boiled sweet potatoes and green corn, and stewed fruits and curries, and roasted fish, and nuts and peanuts and bananas, sliced pineapple, melon and squash; and pickled onions and turnips are sold through the streets of Bangkok and Petchaburee just as pickled beets are in Damascus.

Curry is made of all sorts of things, but is usually a combination of meat or fish and vegetables. If you want an English name for it that all can understand you must call it a *stew*. The ingredients are chopped very fine or pounded in a mortar, especially the red peppers, onions and spices. The predominant flavor is red pepper, so hot and fiery that your mouth will smart and burn for half an hour after you have eaten it. Still, many of the curries are very nice, and with boiled rice furnish a good meal. But sometimes "broth of abominable things is in their vessels," as, for instance, when they make curry of rats or bats or of the meat of animals that have died of disease; and they flavor it with *kapick*, a sort of rotten fish of which all Siamese are inordinately fond. Its chief peculiarity is that it "smells to heaven" and is unrivaled in the strength of its flavor.

Siam is unique in that she produces two of the most abominable, and yet the most delicious, things, if we believe what we hear. These are, first, the durian, a large fruit found only on this peninsula; and, second, kapick, which I hope is not found anywhere outside of Siam.

But to return to the kitchen: it has no chimney, and the smoke finds its way out as best it can, so that nearly everything is black and sooty. There is but little furniture except the fireplace, the rice-pots, a kettle and perhaps a frying-pan, and baskets of various shapes and sizes, one pair being daubed within and without with pitch and used to carry water. There is a little stool, a foot square and six inches high, that they call a table, and on which they place the curry and fish and sliced vegetables, while those who eat squat like toads about it, each having on the floor before him a bowl of rice, which is replenished from a larger dish near by or directly from the rice-pot in the fireplace.

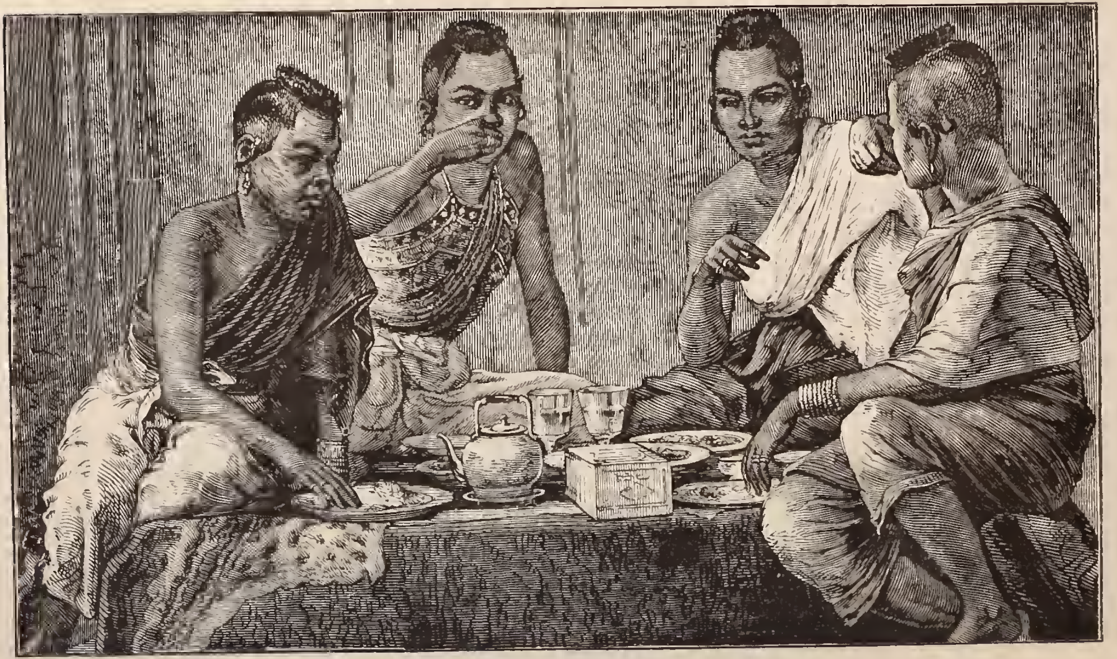
There is no regularity about their meals, and they do not wait for one another, but eat whenever they get hungry. In the higher families the men always eat first and by themselves, and the wives and children and dogs take what is left.

The usual rule is for each one to wash his own rice-bowl and turn it upside down in a basket in the corner of the room, there to drip and dry till the next time it is needed.

They eat with their fingers, very few having even so much as a spoon, and they do not use the wafer-like bread so common in the Levant, which the Syrians double into a kind of three-cornered spoon, and, dipping up some *kibby*, or camel-stew, or rice, eat down spoon and all.

The kitchen floors are nearly all made of split bamboo, with great cracks between, through which they pour all the slops and push the scraps and bones, so that sweeping is unnecessary. Near the door are several large earthen jars for water, which are filled from the river by the women or servants. Here they wash their feet before they enter the house, and their hands and mouths before and after they eat, dipping the water with a gourd or cocoanut-shell. They use brass basins and trays a great deal, but for lack of scouring they are discolored and green with verdigris; and I cannot help thinking that the use of such vessels is one of the fruitful sources of the fearful sores and eruptions with which the whole nation is afflicted.

There are no washing- or ironing-days. Many wear no upper garment, only a waist-cloth, which they keep on when they go to bathe, and when they come up out of the water they change it for a dry one. It is then rubbed a little in the water, wrung out and spread in the sun to dry. If it is



SIAMESE LADIES DINING.

not stolen, they fold it up when it is dry and pat it with their hands, and that is all the ironing they do.

The outer room of the house is barren enough, with perhaps a mat or ox-hide for guests to sit upon, and a tray from which all are served with betel and tobacco. It is considered a great insult not to offer betel to your guests, and a greater one still, I believe, to refuse it when offered. They think the red lips and black teeth it produces are very beautiful. They have a saying, "Any dog can have white teeth," inferring that only human beings know how to blacken theirs.

The bedroom is where things accumulate—old baskets and bags, rags, bundles and boxes. You seldom see idols in a Siamese house, but I have seen them sometimes in the bedroom, especially if any one is sick. There are no bedsteads, no tables, chairs, bureau, washstand, or indeed any of those things which we consider necessary. A torn straw mat or two, or perhaps an ox-hide on the floor, with a brick-shaped pillow stuffed with cotton or a brick itself or block of wood for a pillow, constitute the ordinary Siamese bed.

In families not the very poorest you will find long narrow mattresses stuffed with tree-cotton. They may be covered with an old ragged waistcloth instead of a sheet, and over them is suspended a mosquito curtain of dark-blue cloth or one of unbleached cotton. I have known these curtains to hang for years without ever being changed or washed. The beds and mats are filthy and swarming with bugs, which also infest the curtains, the coverings, the cracks in the floor and the wall, the boxes, and indeed all the rubbish in the room. I have seen them creeping over the people, and no one seems to mind them or think of being ashamed.

These rooms are never cleared out or swept or scrubbed. The cobwebs of succeeding years tangle and entangle themselves in the corners, drape the rafters and the windows, and indeed every place where the busy spinners can do their work. There is seldom more than one window in a bedroom, and at night it is carefully closed, and if it were not for the cracks in the floor and walls the miserable inmates would surely smother. They do not bring their cattle *into* the house, for it is very frail and set upon poles about six feet from the ground, but they do keep them *under* the house, so that they can hear if thieves come to steal them.

They never give any dinner- or tea-parties or visit each other, as we do at home. There is an occasional feast, as at a wedding, a funeral or a hair-cutting, and sometimes neighbor girls will sit together under the trees to sew, or by the same lamp at night to economize oil and to chat and gossip. A great place for the latter pastime is at the temples when they go to hear the Buddhist services, which are usually in Bali, and therefore not understood, or by the river-banks and wells when they go to fetch water.

Thus you see that housekeeping among the Siamese is very simple and primitive. There are no women who have worn out their lives in making and mending, baking and scrubbing, and fussing over a cook-stove. They do not dread the spring house-cleaning or the fall setting up of stoves and putting down of carpets. There is no Thanksgiving dinner to cook, nor Christmas holiday feasting, and no Fourth of July picnic; no preserving or pickling, no canning of fruits nor packing of butter nor pressing of cheese.

But, alas! there is no happy home-life either —no family altar, no pleasant social board where father, mother, sisters and brothers meet three times a day, and, thanking God for food, eat with joy and gladness and grow strong for his service; no sitting-room, where some of the happiest years of our lives are spent in loving companionship with those of our own household, no place for books, and no books to read, except perhaps a few vile tales or books of superstition and witchery.

May God pity Siam and plant in her kingdom many happy Christian homes! May her people be purified and cleansed, and taught of him in all things! Then, and not till then, will the good influences, working from the heart outward, touch and cleanse and beautify all their surroundings.

Note.—The reader will doubtless notice that my description is of Siamese life among the lower classes, not among those who have come in contact with missionaries and been improved somewhat, nor those of the higher classes in Bangkok—the princes and nobles, whose old-time home-life was neater and more orderly than that here described. These, through the influence of foreigners coming to Siam and visits to foreign lands, have raised themselves in the scale of living, and have foreign houses filled with foreign furniture and conveniences, order sumptuous meals from foreign bakeries, and have them placed upon their tables and served in modern style. I do not consider that true *Siamese* housekeeping.

CHAPTER IX.

CHILD-LIFE IN SIAM.

WHEN the Siamese young folks get up in the morning they do not go to the washstand to wash their faces, for the simple reason that Siamese houses can boast no such article of furniture. The cooking utensils and the mats which serve for beds, with the pillows of gayly-painted bamboo or of tightly-stuffed cotton, make up the entire furnishing of a Siamese home. The houses of the poor people are simple bamboo huts of one or two rooms, while their richer neighbors have teak-wood houses, with an extra room perhaps; but all are alike simple in their furniture.

Our little Siamese friend just runs down to the foot of the ladder—for the house is built on posts—to a large jar of water with a cocoanut-shell dipper. There she washes her face—not in the dipper, but by throwing the water over her hands and rubbing them over her face. She needs no towel, for the water is left to dry. She does not brush her teeth, for they are stained black by chewing the betel-nut and seri-leaf. Her hair does not require combing either, for it is all shaved except a little tuft on the top of the head, and that is tied in a little knot and not often combed; and after a girl is twelve years old it is shaved and kept very short.

After breakfast is over—and a very simple meal it is in Siam—the children go off and find some pleasant place in which to play. The baby goes with them, and is carried by the older sister on her right hip, and, with her arm to support the child's back, she walks along as if she had no load to carry.

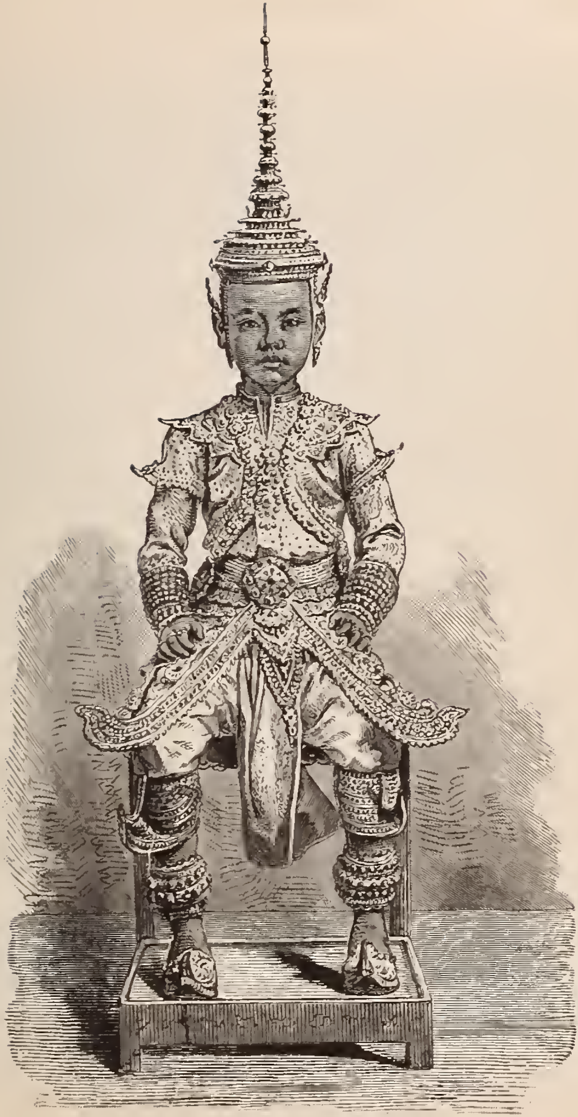
The girls play at keeping house, and make dishes of clay dried in the sun, and from seeds, grasses and weeds they make all sorts of imaginary delicacies. Little images of clay washed with lime are their only dolls; these are sometimes laid in tiny cradles and covered with a few pieces of cloth. The Siamese cradles are made on oblong wooden frames, something like a picture-frame, from which hangs a network bag made of cord, which forms the cradle, and a board is put in the bottom to keep the netted cord in shape. The large cradle of the same sort in which the live baby sleeps is fastened by ropes to the rafters of the house, and forms a cooler and safer cradle than those in which American babies rest. If any one will make a little frame and net some cord for the basket part, she can have a real Siamese cradle.

The boys in Siam are very fond of pitching coins, and spend much of their time in this game. They play leap-frog, and very often jump the rope. Now that so many foreigners come to this country they have learned to play marbles too. Foot-ball is also a very popular game, but instead of a ball they use a little square piece of thick leather with feathers fastened into one side. The men, as well as the boys, enjoy this game, and it is really the most active exercise the Siamese ever take. Fishing is a favorite pastime; and as crabs and prawns are not always in season, they are a greater luxury than fish, and it is considered great fun to catch them. The time for this is when the tide in the river is very low and great mud-banks are left on either side. The little fishermen carry with them a coarse sieve and an earthen jar. The sieve is pushed along under the surface of the mud, and the crabs, when caught, are put into the jars, which the children drag along after them. After they have caught enough crabs they pelt each other with mud, just as American boys do with snowballs. When they are tired and dirty enough they plunge into the water, have a good swim, and come out of the water as clean and happy as boys can be. In the month of March, though usually dry and hot, winds are blowing. At this time the Siamese, young and old, are much engaged in playing games with kites, which are fitted with whistles, and the air resounds with the noise produced by the toys and the shouts of the multitudes of people engaged in the sport. Very frequently, too, mimic battles are fought in the air by means of these kites, skillfully directed by strings held in the hands of the owners.

Siamese children do not have many pets, and those that they do have are used for fighting. Just at sunset the boys will often be seen searching very earnestly for crickets. These little creatures are put into small clay cages, closed at the top by bars of little sticks which let in the light and air. Then the boys gather some evening, put all their crickets into a large box, and watch them fight, as they are sure to do when put together. Small fish, called needle-fish from their long sharp mouths, are also used for this cruel purpose. Two fish are put into separate bottles placed close to each other. The moment they catch sight of each other they begin snapping, but of course can never reach each other. Sometimes a looking-glass is held before one, and it is amusing as well as painful to see how angry it will become. This passion for mimic fights grows in the boys, and when they become men they spend most of their time at cockpits, where nearly all their gambling is done. In spite of all this, animals are well cared for by most persons, for they "make merit" in this way. They also believe that at some future time a fish, a monkey, a dog, a cat, or it may be a snake, a bird or a pig, will be the possible home of their own soul.

The Siamese are fond of flowers, and use them for personal adornment. The children wear wreaths of tiny white flowers on their topknots, and very often men and women put flowers behind their ears and fasten them in their hair. Children are often named for flowers and different colors. The name that almost all babies bear for the first few years of their life is "*Dang*," which means red. When they get a little older they have another name given them, though sometimes this first name clings to them all their lives. When a stranger meets a young girl and wishes to speak to her she calls her "*Rat*," for this is the most polite way of addressing young ladies whose name one does not know.

There are no story-books printed for the children of Siam. Their stories are told to them, and are so uninteresting that American children would wonder how any one could listen to them; but they have never heard better ones, and the sweetest story of all, that of Jesus and his love, has never been heard by millions there. Some of the missionaries have translated into Siamese a number of story-books which are familiar to American children. A number of the familiar Sabbath-school hymns have also been translated,



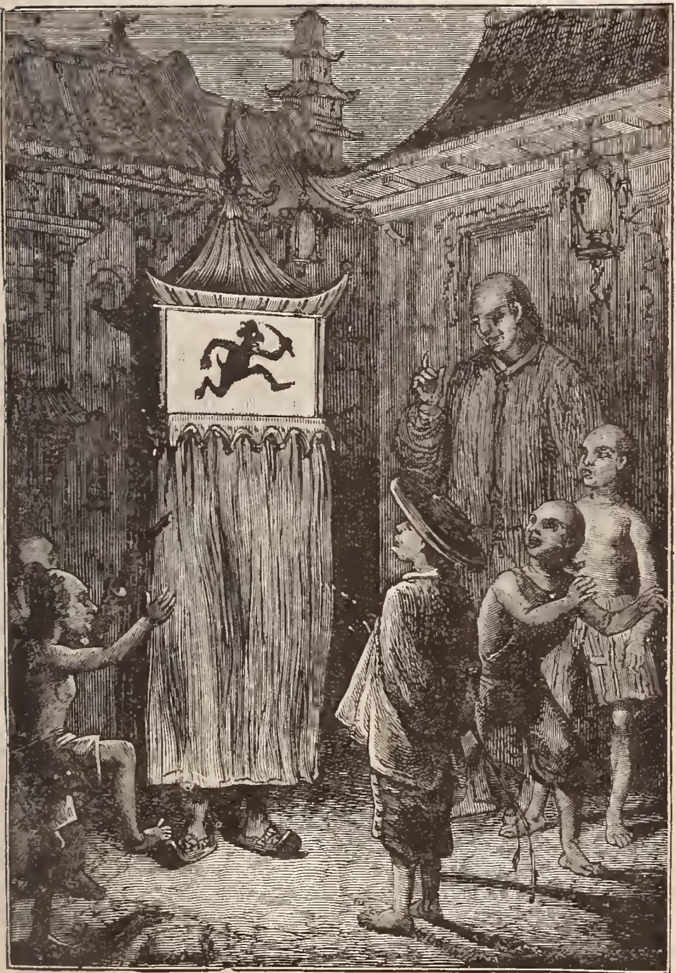
A YOUNG SIAMESE PRINCE.

and are used in the Sabbath-school and church services.

The Siamese know nothing of music. Their songs are a monotonous chant. They have but few musical instruments, and it does not take many to make a full band. These bands play at weddings, funerals and other grand affairs, but they do not vary their programme in the least, playing the same tune on any of these occasions.

The Siamese children are not taught to keep Sunday, for there is no Sabbath in that heathen land; and even their occasional holy days are mere gala-days, when, dressed in their best and gayest garments, they go to the temples with their mothers to make offerings to the image of their dead god Buddha. From the temples they are often taken to some theatrical show to spend the remainder of the day. During the national holiday season these theatrical performances are going on all the time, besides Chinese street-shows very much like our Punch and Judy; and fathers, mothers and children all gamble.

As the streets in Siam are almost all rivers and canals, the Siamese boys and girls early learn to row, and paddle their little boats almost as soon as they learn to swim, which they do when they are only four or five years old. Their canoes are sometimes so small that it is a puzzle to know how they can manage them so safely.



A CHINESE STREET SHOW.

We have seen that in their plays the Siamese and American children have much in common, but in their home-life it is different. Siamese parents love their children as truly, if not as wisely, as American fathers and mothers love theirs. Generally the children are allowed to do just as they please until the parents become angry; then they are sometimes very cruelly punished. The hand of a little one is sometimes bent back until the child writhes in agony. They are whipped very severely too, although it must be confessed that the children sometimes scream and cry very loudly before they are hurt. But these punishments are not often administered for what we would consider sinful. The parents lie, swear and gamble, so that they cannot well punish their children for following their example. They often curse their children for a very little thing, and so the children learn to curse each other. But there is one thing that the Siamese children could teach young folks in America—reverence for their parents and for old age and respect for those in authority over them.

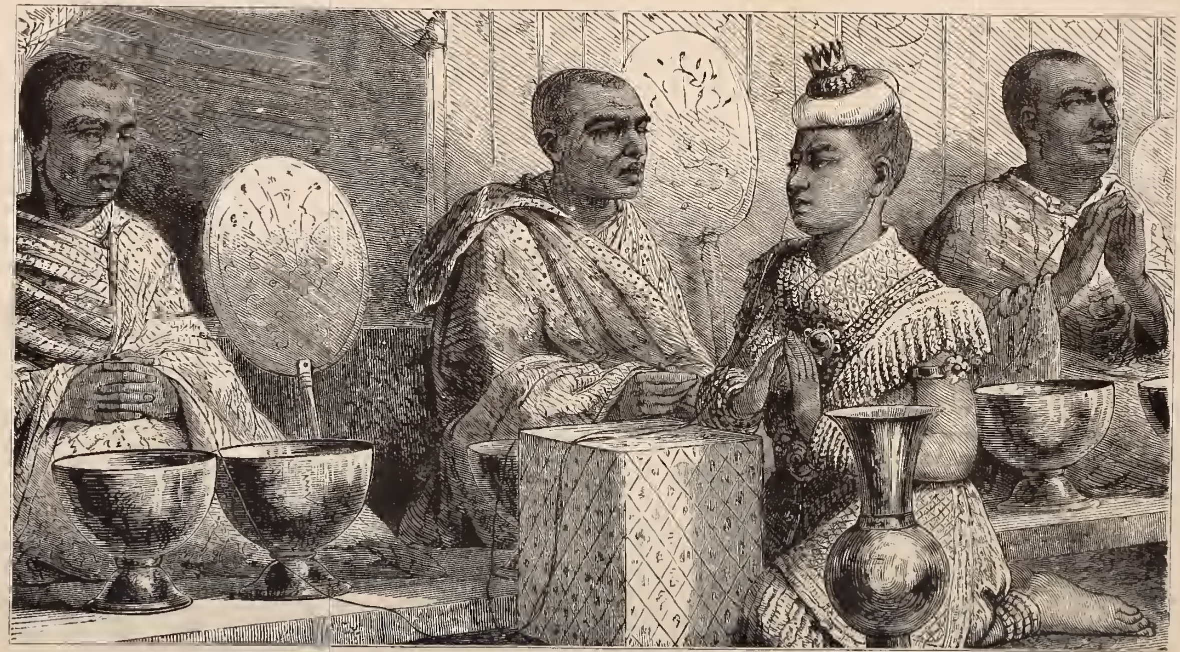
CHAPTER X.

FIRST HAIR-CUTTING OF A YOUNG SIAMESE.

THE attention of the traveler as he passes in his boat along the rivers and canals of Siam, in town or country, is often arrested by the sound of music proceeding from beneath an extemporized awning in front of some dwelling by the wayside. There a promiscuous crowd have gathered and are witnessing a theatrical performance, the actors and actresses with chalked faces or hideous masks and in glittering and fantastic attire. The centre of attraction, however, is manifestly a pretty child of a dozen summers or so, richly attired and fairly overlaid with jewelry—necklaces, gold chains, armlets, bracelets and anklets.

A hair-cutting festival is in progress—a *kone-chook,* as it is called, the ceremonies and the gayeties that attend the first clipping of the cherished topknot on the child's head. This is the great occasion in the life of the child, and indeed second only to that of a wedding or a funeral in the life of the family. The Siamese in shaving the heads of their children, as they do from their earliest infancy, always leave a small circular lock of hair on the top of the head to be untouched by razor or shears till the child is eleven, thirteen, or fifteen years old. Were it to be cut at an earlier day or without the customary ceremonies, the parents would fear their child would become insane or a prey to a kind of demon they call a *yak*. This lock grows a foot or so long, and is kept oiled and neatly twisted into a knot. Through this a gilt or golden large-headed hairpin three inches long is thrust, and not unfrequently a garland of fragrant white flowers is worn around it, giving young Siamese children quite a pretty appearance.

When the right year has arrived and the lucky day for the hair-cutting has been fixed by the astrologers, the friends of the family are invited, and a band of play-actors engaged and a company of Buddhist priests, and for a day or two there is a constant round of prayer-chanting, play-acting and feasting of priests and friends. The ceremonies begin with the priests chanting in chorus their prayers, seated cross-legged on mats on an elevated platform, a thread of white cotton yarn passing from their hands around the clasped hands of the kneeling child and back to them again, serving as a sort of electric conductor to the child of the benefits their prayers evoke. The next morning, when the auspicious moment arrives, the man of highest rank among the



REMOVAL OF THE TUFT OF A YOUNG SIAMESE.

guests with shears clips off the long-cherished lock, and the head is close shaved for the first time; and then the child, dressed in white, is led to an elevated seat under a canopy of white cloth and consecrated water is poured freely over it, first by the parents, then by kindred and friends. Its drenched garments are now replaced by gay attire, and a curious ceremony called *weean teean* is next gone through with. Candles are lighted, and while the music is playing loudly are carried five times round the child, who is seated on a kind of throne between two circular five-storied flower-stand-like altars, called *bai-sees*, containing cooked rice, fruit and flowers, offerings to the spirits of the air. The candles are then blown out in such a way that the smoke shall be borne toward the child. This is supposed to stock the boy or girl with spirit and courage for the duties of life.

The relatives and friends of the family now are expected to make a present in money to the child, each according to his ability or station, the sums varying from one to eighty pieces of silver (60 cents to $48), so that the newly-shorn youngster will on these occasions receive enough to give him quite a start in the world or if a maiden sufficient for a dowry.

And now a general feasting ensues, the yellow-clad priests being first served, and for a day or two more the music and theatrical performances continue. After this the children are reckoned as young men and young women. The *konechook* is in fact their "coming-out" festival.

Those whose poverty will not allow the expense of such an affair take their child when it arrives at the proper age to a Buddhist temple, and have a priest shave off the tuft with some simple religious ceremony.

If so much is made of this observance in the case of ordinary children, the celebration of the first hair-cutting of a young prince or princess, as may well be imagined, is a very grand affair. It is then styled a *sokan.* Preparations for it commence months beforehand; the governors of provinces far and near are summoned to be present; the highest priests in the kingdom are invited; and public festivities, with free theatres, shadow-plays, rope-dancing, etc., to amuse the immense crowds of people present, are kept up for many days.

If the child prince or princess is of the very highest rank, part of the ceremony takes place on an artificial mountain constructed in the court of the palace of strong timberwork and boards, covered so entirely with sheets of pewter gilded that it appears like a beautiful mountain of gold. The one erected a few years ago for the *sokan* of the eldest daughter of the reigning king—she being also a great grand-daughter of the ex-regent—the princess Sri Wililaxan, was sixty feet high (higher than a four-story building), and had cliffs here and grottoes there, and lakes and waterfalls, and trees with artificial monkeys and birds and serpents, which by concealed machinery were made to move among them as if alive, and winding paths that led to the top, where an elegant gilt pavilion gleamed in the sun.

The ceremonies on this occasion commenced with the chanting of prayers in the hall of state at the palace by twenty-four head priests of the chief temples of the city, and the lighting of "the candle of victory," a huge wax candle six feet high, which burned day and night till the moment the hair was cut. The next morning these same priests were sumptuously feasted at the palace, and dismissed with presents of priests' robes, cushions, fans, etc., and another company took their place.

In the afternoon was the first of the grand processions to escort the young princess to the great hall of state where the religious services were held. In the open square in front of this hall seats were provided for six or seven hundred of the nobility to witness the procession, themselves a most brilliant sight in their coats of gold brocade, many sparkling with diamonds. As soon as the king arrived and seated himself in the high pavilion prepared for him a troop of beautiful girls in glittering dresses descended from the golden mountain—from the gilded temple there—and at the base of the mountain, in full view of His Majesty, danced the flower-dance to the sound of native music, waving branches of gold and silver flowers.

Heralded by music, the imposing procession now came on. First there were masked men representing Japanese warriors; then Siamese soldiers in European uniform, with bands of music; then two noblemen, representing celestial messengers, archangels, dressed in all white with gold embroidery, and having crowns on their heads terminating in a long, slender, white spire full eighteen inches high. These led on a hundred more angels with like high-pointed spires on their heads; then came Indian musicians and yet more angels, and then companies of men and boys of all nationalities that were to serve the princess, each in their national costume—first, a troop of Chinese in blue, then of Malays with white turbans, then Anamese, Peguans, Laos, Karens.

And now a pretty sight—more than a hundred children of noblemen dressed in white, with little gold coronets on their topknots and loaded with jewelry, all kept in their places by holding on to a rope drawn tight by strong men before and behind. Trumpeters and drummers in scarlet came next, and Brahmans in white and gold scattering flowers and sprinkling holy water. Men now came on carrying the peculiar standards of royalty: eight had each a sort of many-storied umbrella of gold cloth, the staff fifteen feet high; others carried huge golden curiously-carved fans with long handles, others spears, and one the sword of state. Two pretty damsels, robed and crowned as queens, with bunches of peacock feathers in their hands, followed, and then came the little princess herself, in white robes and wearing a small diadem, seated on a golden throne borne aloft on the shoulders of pages in purple. By her side walked six of the great nobles of the kingdom as archangels, with high white steeple-like crowns, and twelve maids of honor in rich dresses followed, bearing her gold tray of betel, her spittoon, fan and other articles of use; then there were more of the storied umbrellas and huge fans and spear-bearers. Next in the procession walked with lady-like and graceful carriage fifty or more of the king's wives in ranks of four, all wearing robes of snowy silk reaching to their feet, with scarfs of silver hue, and eight or nine massive gold chains passing over one shoulder and across the breast, as did the scarfs, the other shoulder and arm being left bare. After these came various officials of the harem, and last the female police of the palace.

Following the women of the palace were representatives of women of all the nations living in Siam and near it—Chinese, Japanese, Hindoo, Burmese, Laos, Cochin-Chinese, etc.—each in their national dress, the last in long blue silk coats with orange trousers. These were succeeded by the Siamese servants of the princess—hundreds of lively girls in bright scarfs; after them two white ponies were led by grooms. Then came the men-servants, many hundreds, in white jackets, and a regiment of Siamese soldiers formed the rear-guard.

When the princess reached the pavilion where His Majesty sat, her bearers stopped, and she made homage to her royal father by raising her joined hands above her head. He, rising to receive her, lifted her to his side, and together they passed in to where a relay of priests were chanting prayers. After an hour or so, the princess, coming out, was escorted back to the gate of the inner palace, all going in the same order as that in which they came. These processions were repeated every afternoon for three days.

On the fourth and great day the ceremonies commenced in the morning soon after daybreak, for so the Brahman astrologers had directed. The princess, borne in procession as usual, was taken to the great hall of the palace, and there, precisely at the lucky moment, the lock of hair about which all this ado was made was solemnly cut with scissors by the highest of the princes. Her head was then close shaved with gold, silver and steel razors. The candle of victory was now extinguished. Still clad in white, our little princess was next carried in procession to the foot of the golden mountain and seated on a marble bench in a pool representing the holy lake Anodad. Here the king took five jars—of gold, silver, brass, bronze and stone—and poured holy water over her. She shivered, and almost cried. But the great princes and princesses, and after them the chief of nobles, came up, and each in turn poured water over the poor child with trying deliberation for nearly half an hour. At last she was permitted to retire to a curtained pavilion near and exchange her drenched robes of white for the rich apparel of royalty. The prime minister and the minister of foreign affairs, gorgeously clad as angels, escorted her now up the golden mountain. At the summit an aged uncle of the king and her royal father himself received her. In the pretty temple there she was invested with a crown of solid gold, and then descended in full royal state covered with jewels, and was carried in procession thrice round the mountain, her right hand toward it.

But, lo! a marvelous transformation in the appearance of the procession had now taken place. The angels that had been clad in white now assumed pink or rose tints; the ladies of the palace had golden-colored scarfs instead of silver, and the pretty children that came in white were now seen clothed in pink, with bright red bands around their topknots and coronets, all indicative of the joyous change the clipping of that lock of hair had brought to the royal child.

The morning's ceremony lasted in all about three hours, and then the princess was borne away to needful rest for a season.

In the afternoon another ceremony was performed—the "weean teean," or encircling with candles, of which mention has been made before. Borne to the hall of state in procession, the princess, in rich costume, was seated on a central throne, between two *bai-sees*, which in this case were five-storied piles of round golden trays successively diminishing in size toward the top, looking like circular flower-stands, each containing cooked rice-cakes, scented oil and flour, young cocoanuts and bananas—all surmounted by a bouquet of flowers. Near her sat her royal father. All around the hall were the princes and nobles and ladies of rank seated in a circle. Two chiefs of the Brahmans standing near the *bai-sees* lighted in succession fifteen large wax candles set in gold, silver and crystal candlesticks, and handed them one by one to the highest in rank present, who with a wave of his hand guided the flame toward the princess and passed the candle on to the next, who did the same. At the same time others of the Brahmans were beating their peculiar drums with a wild burst of music, and hymns were chanted while each of the fifteen candles made the circuit of the hall five times, and then were handed back to the Brahman, who suddenly extinguished them, blowing the smoke toward the princess, thus wafting to her, as it were, the invigorating influence of beneficent spirits, of which they say the air is full. With the same object the Brahman gave the child some of the rice with the milk of the young cocoanut, and, dipping his finger in the sacred oil and scented flour, anointed the right foot in three places. The king then poured holy water over his daughter's hands, which she passed over her head, and the ceremonies for the day were over. For three days this weean-teean rite was performed, and the processions escorting the princess back and forth went on, and then the sokan festival was ended.

During these last three days congratulatory presents in silver coin were most liberally made to the little princess by all of any rank in the kingdom. The amount received on this occasion was not less, it is said, than fifty thousand dollars—enough certainly to keep a Siamese princess in pin-money for life.

One cannot help remarking, How costly all these vain heathen superstitions! And all this pomp and parade and immense expense and these wearisome ceremonies, cheerfully undertaken to avert from the king's daughter imaginary evils, from which, if they existed, God only could protect, and to induce prosperity which God only could give! Sad indeed it is to reflect how completely, in this and in all the customs of this people, all reference to or thought of the Lord and Maker of us all, on whom all creatures are dependent for every blessing, and whose favor is life and true happiness, has been shut out.

Let us, "whose souls are lighted by wisdom from on high," pray earnestly for these boys and girls in Siam, who now trust in these foolish rites and offerings to spirits that do not exist, that as they enter upon manhood and womanhood the blessing of the almighty One may rest upon them, so that they, more favored than those before them, may learn and believe and rejoice in the truth as it is in Christ the Lord.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SCHOOLS OF SIAM.

IN Siam schools are made up of boys and girls, just as they are in other countries. But the boys and girls of Siam are not made of "sugar and spice and all that's nice," but of fish and fowl, of curry and rice, of onions and garlic, and everything nice. And they seem to be very good materials to make children of, too, for they are usually very bright and clever.

They commit to memory more readily than the average American school-boy, but in studies requiring a process of reasoning or long-continued hard work they would probably fall behind. They usually begin a new study or work with great avidity, but often tire before it is half finished. The average Siamese boy of nine or ten years of age does not ask more than a day to learn all the large and small letters of the English alphabet, and a tiptop student will only want half a day. In a year afterward he will be able to read fluently in *Wilson's Third Reader*, and translate it all into his own language, and will also be able to write nicely and know something of arithmetic.

A teacher of a Siamese school need have little trouble with its government if it were not so impossible ever to be sure of the truth. When a boy gets into mischief he always plans to lie about it; and he can do it with such an air of candor that he will make the teacher almost disbelieve his own senses. But this fault is doubtless largely owing to the early training in heathen homes and in the old-fashioned "wat-schools" of the country.

The prevailing religion and the education of a country usually stand side by side, and aid each other. Their united influence is sometimes to spread sunshine and prosperity over the land, and sometimes to fasten the chains of superstition and blight the moral feelings of the entire nation.

Siam is no exception to the general rule. For centuries the Buddhist temples have been the only "temples of learning," and the men who shave their heads, dress in yellow robes and beg their food have performed the double office of pedagogue and priest. It would seem as if Siam ought to be a highly-educated country when these mendicant teachers form one-thirtieth part of the entire population, and when the custom of the country is such that parents usually require their sons to spend all the years of boyhood and youth under the care of these teachers in the temples. So universal is this custom that work for boys is something that has not yet been invented in this country.

As soon as a little boy is out of his babyhood his parents at once begin to look around for a desirable teacher for him. A priest is selected: usually he is a friend or relative of the parents, and one whom they think they can trust to care for and educate their boy. The child is then taken to the temple, or *wat*, as it is called, and given to the priest. In doing this the parent gives up all claim, authority and oversight of the boy to the priest, often closing a long speech on the subject by begging the priest to "whip him a great deal; do not break his back or put out his eyes; anything less than that you can do: I won't say a word."

While the child is in the wat the parent is expected to clothe him and also to contribute liberally to the *lunch-basket* that this man of holy orders carries around daily to have filled by pious Buddhists. The child's most important duty now is to wait on his teacher, follow him on his morning tramps, paddle his boat, serve his food and be ready at all times to obey his wishes.

The priest, on his part, is expected to teach the boy to read and write; and if he is a very extraordinary "man of letters" he may possibly teach the first principles of arithmetic; this, however, is a rare accomplishment, gained only by the favored few.

But whatever else these Buddhist schoolmasters fail in teaching, there is one lesson that they succeed in imparting better than most college professors of other countries, and that is a feeling of respect on the part of their pupils for their teachers, no matter how indifferently the work may have been done. No matter if ten years have been spent in doing what should have been done in as many months, still, any Siamese man would be branded as a wretched ingrate if he did not through all his life honor and respect the man who taught him to read. This is at least one good thing to be found in the old-fashioned wat education; but just how it is gained, and where the secret of success lies, are somewhat of a mystery.

Doubtless, it is partly owing to the religious element. The yellow-robes themselves are objects of veneration, and Buddha, as it is claimed, was only a teacher, so that the office of teaching, as well as the dress of the teacher, is calculated to inspire fear and respect. And perhaps the *birch* or ratan discipline, which is often terribly severe, may have something to do with it. A mistake in writing or spelling usually brings down the teacher's lash, and this is called *son hi chum* (teaching to remember); for a more heinous offence of disobedience or want of respect toward his teacher the pupil's hands are tied around a post, and then he is whipped—not four or five strokes, but it is one, two or three *dozen*, as the case seems to require. A teacher is supposed to take an interest in his pupil, and the pupil to be improving, just in proportion to the amount of corporal punishment administered.

One day a man brought his boy to put him into the "King's School." After the arrangements were all made and he was about to say "Good-bye" to his boy, he turned to the principal of the school and said, "Please whip him a great deal; I want him to learn fast. If at any time you think he deserves one dozen, please give him two dozen, and if you think he deserves two dozen, please give him four dozen. Don't let him be a dunce." And with this loving injunction he took his leave. Another little boy has dropped out of the same school entirely, the probable reason being that his grandmother's repeated request to *te hi mak mak* (whip him a great deal) was entirely disregarded. These wat-schools—if schools they may be called—are free from all the trammels of school laws and school committees, each teacher being left free to follow his own will in everything. Neither are there any school-houses or school-furniture. The teacher seats himself, tailor-fashion, on the floor of his own filthy, cheerless room, and his pupils sit in the same way around him.

There is only one school-book (which is a kind of combined primer and reader), and after that is mastered the learner must practice reading on whatever he can find; it may be a fabulous tale, a drama or a ghost-story, but certainly it will not be a good and truthful book that will elevate and improve the reader, for the literature of Siam has nothing of that kind. Occasionally the books that have been prepared by the missionaries are found in the hands of these wat-boys, but that is the exception and not the rule.

These schools have no regular school-term, and of course no vacations; no regular hours for study, and of course none for play; no classes, and of course no emulation and no chance for a dull boy to be helped over the hard places by his near neighbor. The whole work is controlled by the whim of the teacher at the time, without principle and without rule.

If a boy recites once or twice a week, all is well, and if he recites only once or twice a month, still it is all right; and if in the course of eight or ten years he has learned very little, there is no one to complain. He has at least been kept out of the way at home, and now he is of such an age that he can become a *nain* and spend a few more years in obtaining a smattering of the Pali or sacred language, and after this he can become a full-fledged priest, which is the summit of the fondest parent's wishes.

While a boy is at a wat he is not usually called a scholar or pupil, but a *wat-boy*—a name which generally implies everything that is naughty. His companions are idle, vicious fellows, fond of cockfighting, swearing and gambling, and he grows up among them bad just in proportion as he is clever and gifted.

The conservative men of Siam are bewailing these latter days, and among other things they aver that wat education is not what it was in the good old times long ago—that then the priests were more strict with their boys, and made them work and study more than they do now. This may be so. But if the men who were educated in the temples years ago, and who should now be the pillars and producers of the country, are to be taken as exponents of what that system of education can do for manhood, then we may safely infer that temple-life was at that time just what it is now—a school of idleness and vice, and those who leave its haunts are fitted only for a lazy, aimless existence. This the natives themselves freely admit, and the time has evidently come when something better is demanded.

While Siam has been doing, perhaps, the best she knew for her sons, her daughters in some respects have been much better off. They are not supposed to need any education, and are therefore trained from childhood to help their mothers with all kinds of heavy as well as light work. Thus it comes to pass that the girls grow up to be the "hewers of wood and drawers of water," the planters and the traders of Siam, while the influence of their brothers is to a great extent a dead weight on the prosperity of the country.

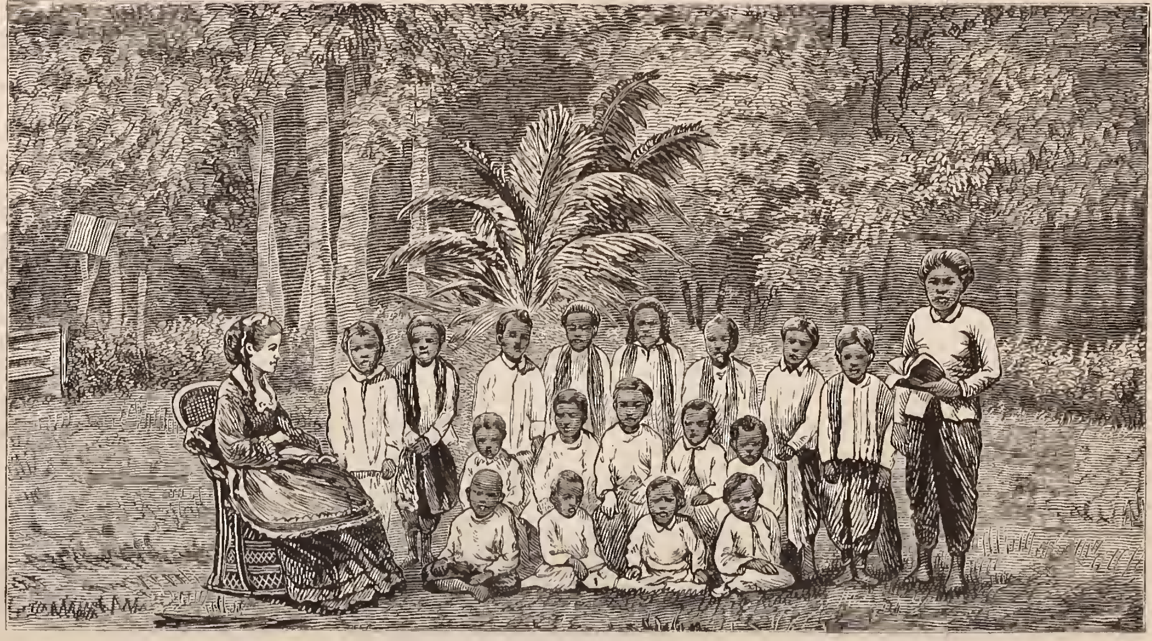
And now what have missionaries done to show Siam a better way? Christianity implies knowledge, and missionaries believe in schools. "The Oriental mind is quick in childhood, but early stops its growth;" then to civilize and Christianize such a people the most hopeful plan is to begin with the children. So, wherever a Presbyterian mission has been established in Siam the church and the school have grown up together.

The mission-school for boys in Bangkok was opened in the early days of the work there, and through all these years it has been doing a grand work in educating the children of the Church as well as those brought to it from heathen families, who have often carried the blessed truths of the Bible with them to their heathen homes. In this, which was the first mission-school in Siam, many plans have been tried and much valuable experience gained.

In Siam, as in other Eastern countries, the native mind is becoming roused to seek for knowledge, and there is a growing desire to learn the English language. This wish draws many into the boys' school who would not otherwise be found there. Trade and commerce are calling for clerks and assistants who have a knowledge of English, and a boy with only a smattering of the coveted foreign tongue is in demand at high wages, and is thus often induced to leave school long before he is fit for a business-life. This at present is a great detriment to all the schools, but as the demand becomes supplied a higher standard will be necessary and a more thorough education sought.

In the boys' mission-school it has been found necessary to have all who enter make a written promise to remain a specified number of years, so as to ensure a reasonable knowledge of English and a better knowledge of that more important lesson, that "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son." There is hardly a business-house in Bangkok that does not have one or more than one young man in its employ who has been educated in the mission-school, and some of them are consistent Christian men, a credit to their teachers and an honor to the school.

Buddhism is planned only for men, and so girls are not taught in the wat-schools; but as the religion of Jesus takes in the whole family, misson-work would be lame indeed without its



A SCHOOL IN SIAM.

schools for girls. In the East knowledge is thought to be not only unnecessary, but positively injurious, to women; so when the missionary ladies first tried to gather up pupils for a girls' school they met with all kinds of objections from the parents. In the first place, they could not understand the motives. How could any one be so unselfish as to spend time in teaching a lot of girls without any compensation? They did not believe it. So at once evil-minded persons spread infamous tales, and explained the thing by affirming that it was only a trick to secure the children, and by and by they would be sent to America and sold as slaves.

Another objection was that for girls to go to school was altogether *against the custom*, and that, of itself, was enough in Siam. Again, suppose they went to school and learned to read, then they would know more than their mothers, and how could they honor and respect their parents, as they were in duty bound to do?

But the greatest objection of all was that the girls were the workers in the family, and if they were to spend the day in school who would *ha kin* (seek a living) for the family? And this seemed to be a real difficulty.

The question of bread and meat, or rather rice and fish, the missionary could neither ignore nor argue away. These heathen mothers in this respect were just like other human beings: they would not willingly give up their daughters' help at home, which was of real value to the whole family, for an education which they believed would be injurious in every way. They hated the new religion and despised the offered education.

As far as could be seen then, there was but one way out of the difficulty; and so the question was asked, "How much can your girl earn per day?" and the old mother answered, "When she finds work she makes a *fuang* per day" (seven and a half cents). Then said the missionary, "Send her to me, and I will let her spend half the day in learning to read and the other half in working, and *for her work* I will pay her a fuang." At this the mother began to waver, and at last said, "I am very poor, and sometimes it is hard to find work, so I will let her try it." The next morning the industrial school for girls at Petchaburee was opened with one scholar, and she was seated on the floor of the veranda of the mission-house, and for nearly a month there were no additions. But there are times when it is safe to wait. A very simple white jacket was cut, and Perm was taught to make it for herself. After many days, and with pushing the needle from her instead of drawing it toward her, and with holding the seam between her little bare toes instead of pinning it to her knee, the jacket was pronounced finished and ready to wear—the first the child had ever owned in her life. Then she was allowed to take some soap and give herself a bath, and then to don her new jacket and a new waist-cloth. That evening, when she went home, she was the happiest child in the village, and served as a good advertisement of the new-fashioned school. Before very long the veranda and the missionary's hands were both full.

That was seventeen years ago, and from that time to this the school has been carried on, and done a grand good work in many respects—one of the most important of which is that it has furnished teachers for five branch schools that have been established in different localities around it. Many of its pupils are now industrious and pious wives and mothers at the head of Christian families, while a few have gone, as there is good reason to believe, to finish their education in heaven.

Some object strongly to the plan of giving money to the pupils of mission-schools, and perhaps elsewhere: *giving boarding* instead of money, or some other plan, might be better; but after so many years of experience those in charge are fully convinced that for Petchaburee this is the only feasible plan.

If a respectable, self-reliant Church is ever built up in Siam, it will be by cultivating the graces of industry, cleanliness and godliness together; and the best place to do this is in well-appointed industrial schools. Would that such could be established all over the country for both boys and girls, and then we might reasonably hope that some time the number of idle loungers might grow "beautifully less"!

A few years ago the king showed his appreciation of what this school was doing for his people when he gave a donation of two thousand dollars to help furnish the new school-building.

Some years after the girls' school at Petchaburee was started a school was established for girls in Bangkok, but on a different plan in some respects, the former being a day-school and for the working classes, while the latter is a boarding-school and for a higher class of pupils. In this school instruction is given in both the native and English languages, and the industries are principally ornamental. Some specimens of the work done in this school were put into the Centennial Exhibition in 1882, and His Majesty paid a pleasant compliment to the school when he purchased the entire lot for use in the royal palace.

A knowledge of what the mission-schools are doing for those under their care no doubt at first suggested to His Majesty's mind the idea of inaugurating something in the way of government schools that would be after the American model and entirely different from the wat-schools. As a first step, the "King's School" was planned, and at the king's request was placed in charge of one of the American missionaries.

As yet, this school is only an infant in years, and no prophet has been found wise enough to foretell what its future may be. It has passed through all the diseases incident to childhood and youth, and some of them have been of a most malignant nature. But, what was worst of all, its doctors could never agree as to where the trouble was or what remedies should be used. At length, however, it began to improve, and now, at four years of age, it begins to breathe freely and develop in strength and manly beauty. May Heaven's richest blessing rest upon it, and may God grant that the strength of its manhood may be consecrated to his service!

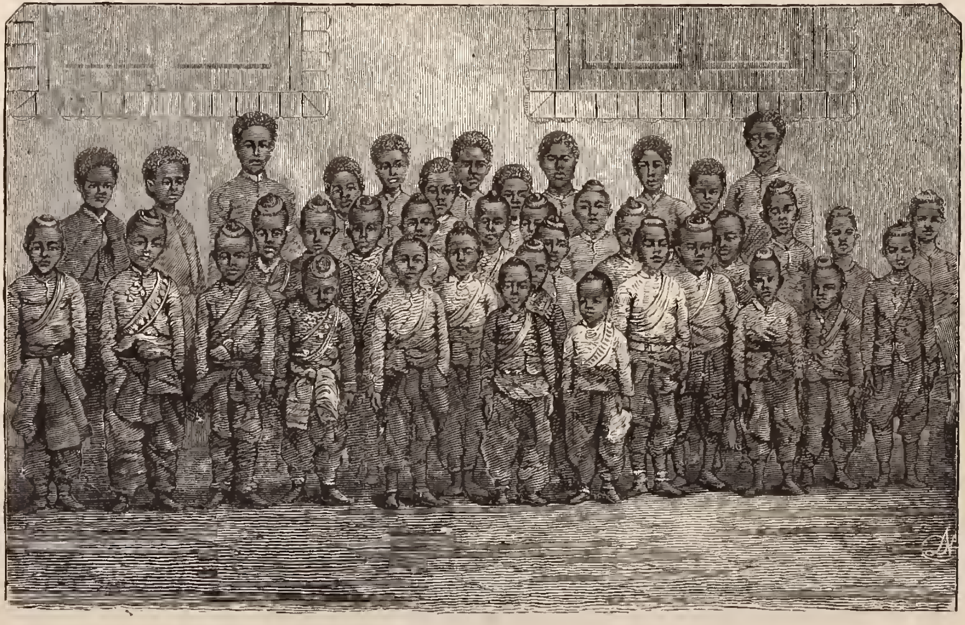
Difficulties are to be expected in the prosecution of every new enterprise, and the most hopeful friends of the King's School have not been much disappointed with its various trials. The committee to whose care His Majesty committed this school were entirely unused to educational affairs, and for want of experience many and serious blunders were made. But experience has taught useful lessons for future use, and the time seems to be near when steps will be taken to provide something better to take the place of the wat-school.

The native mind is being directed to this subject as never before. A striking proof of this fact is, that the queen, who is a most zealous Buddhist, is now having a large and beautiful school-building put up as a monument to her royal sister, who was drowned two years ago. This building is not yet finished, and it is not known just how it is to be managed; but it certainly seems to mark a new era, as heretofore Buddhist temples were the only memorial buildings in the country.

One great question for the near future seems to be, What kind of influences will mould and shape this new educational work? Will it be the English moralist, the French Jesuit, the German infidel or the American Christian? The king plainly intimated his wishes when he asked a missionary to take charge of the school under his own patronage. And while at that time there were hardly missionaries enough in Siam to hold on to the direct mission-work, still the hope of securing the vantage-ground for Christianity was such that the request could not be refused. And although, as yet, direct religious instruction cannot be a part of the daily routine of the school-room, there is no need to be in haste. Much must first be done to disarm prejudice and to conciliate the minds of conservative Buddhists, and prove to them that the missionaries are *true* friends, who labor for the highest welfare of the country. When that shall be made evident, more liberty will be accorded to Christian instructors.

Some of the members of the royal family are afraid to trust the heir-apparent and his royal brothers to the influence of Christianity; so a Calcutta Brahman has been employed and a school started in the palace. A friend went to visit this school one day, and the teacher handed some writing-books to the visitor to let him see how well the little princes could write. Almost the first page he looked at had this as a copy: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." This shows what unexpected means God sometimes takes to teach the truths of his own word, and how foolish it is for any one to suppose that the English language can be learned without learning the religion of Jesus at the same time. May this not be the great good that God in his providence means to bring out of this universal desire for a knowledge of the English language? It is so full of Christianity that to know the one is to know the other.

May we not hope that our mother-tongue may some day become the language of all nations, and that Christianity may be the religion of the world?



A FEW OF THE CHILDREN OF THE LATE FIRST KING OF SIAM.

CHAPTER XII.

HOLIDAYS IN SIAM.

SIAMESE holidays are very different from those of Europe and America. They have no Christmas, for, as a nation, they know nothing about Christ. Their New Year holidays, strange to say, are not celebrated in the first month of the year, but in the fifth, which corresponds to our March or April. On one of the three days that they then observe the doors of the temples are thrown open, and the people—women and children especially—dressed in their best attire, enter, and, bowing down before the idol, make offerings of flowers. The more wealthy have prayers and preaching at their own houses, when they feast the priests and make presents to them. During these days all are allowed to gamble, and men, women and children engage in games of chance with all their hearts. On New Year's Day we, in Christian lands, pray our heavenly Father to watch over and bless us and our friends through the year. In this heathen land the king has companies of priests on the tops of the walls around the city proper going through certain ceremonies in concert to drive away evil spirits, and on one of these nights large and small guns are fired for this purpose from the top of the walls every twenty minutes till morning.

Soon after New Year's Day, and again some six months later, the Siamese princes, lords and nobles, and all among the people who hold any office, however small, take the oath of allegiance. They assemble at the royal palace and drink the "water of vengeance" and sprinkle it upon their foreheads. Do you ask, "What is the water of vengeance?" It is water in which have been dipped swords, daggers, spears and other instruments by which the king executes vengeance on those who rebel against him. By drinking of it they express their willingness to be punished with these instruments if found disloyal. The priests are excused from this service by virtue of the sanctity of their office, but they meet in the royal temple on that day and perform appropriate religious services. Some of this water is sent to the residences of the governors in the distant provinces, and the neighboring people assemble there to drink it.

Soon after the ceremony of taking the oath of allegiance the Siamese have for four days a kind of *second New Year*, the time for which is fixed by the sun instead of the moon. The priests are invited to meet at the palace for a royal festival, and the people too feast the priests and one another and play at their games of chance. The women bring water, and bathe first the idols, and then their grandparents and other aged relatives, by pouring water freely upon them.

They observe three days of their sixth month with very great veneration as the anniversaries of the birth, the attaining to divinity and the death of Buddha. These three days are a great time for "making merit," which they think they do by giving to the poor, by making offerings to the priests and to the idols and by listening to prayers and preaching. All classes, young and old, high and low, rich and poor, go to the temple-grounds and make little conical mounds of sand a foot or two high, surmounted with flowers and small flags of all colors.

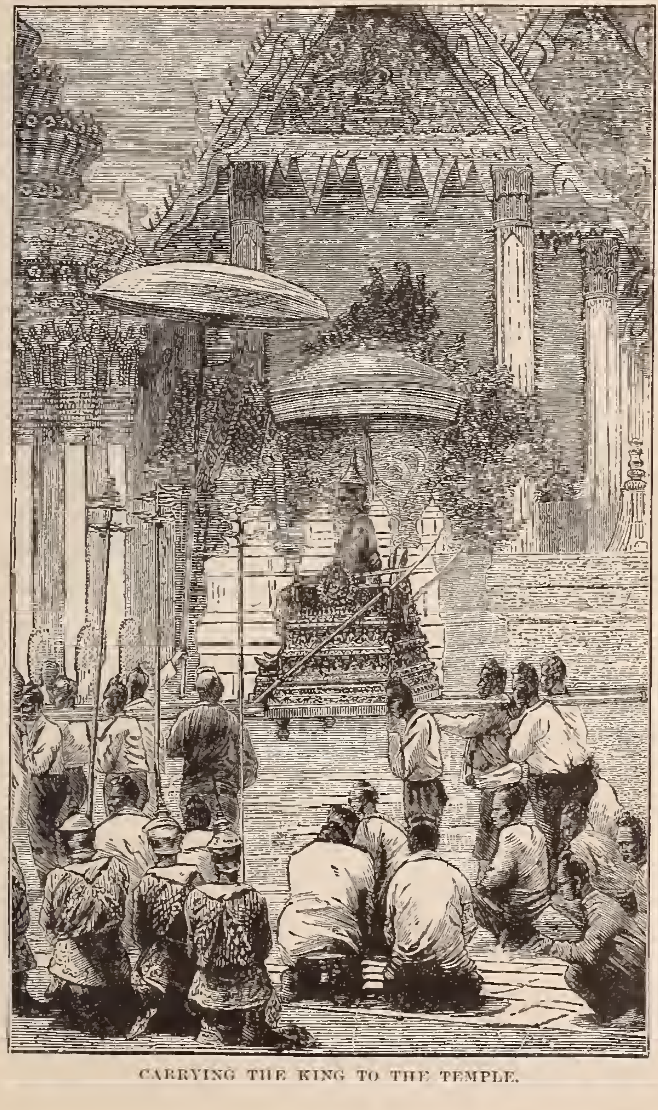
At the beginning of seed-time, generally in May, the time being fixed by astrologers, they have their *Raknah* holiday, when the minister of agriculture is for the day regarded as king, because he, as the king's substitute, holds the plough, breaks up the ground and plants the first rice of the year. He is escorted by a public procession to some field, and there the priests, after superstitious ceremonies, decorate a pair of oxen with flowers and fasten them to a plough, which is also trimmed with flowers. The minister then holds the plough while the oxen drag it over the ground for about an hour. Four elderly women from the king's household scatter rice over the ploughed part of the field, and leave it there uncovered. The oxen are then liberated, and four kinds of the grain that the people most prize are placed before them. Whichever kind they eat much of the people think will be scarce; that of which they eat little or none they think will be abundant throughout the year, and they plant accordingly.

They have two holidays every year for *swinging*, when the minister of agriculture is carried by a long procession to a place where there is a high swing between two tall poles. A brick platform covered with white muslin and tastefully curtained has been prepared for him. Attended by four Brahman priests, two on his right hand and two on his left, he ascends this platform and stands on one foot till three games of swinging are ended, which generally occupy two hours. If he ventures to touch his foot once to the floor during the games, it is said the Brahmans are allowed to take all his property from him. The game is to catch in the mouth a purse of money that is suspended within reach of the swinger. When the games are over the swingers sprinkle on all about them water that has been made holy by the priests. This is the Brahmanical mode of calling down blessings on the people of the land. About noon the minister is escorted home by a procession similar to the one that took him there. These ceremonies and games are repeated on the second day. Princes and officers of government and dense crowds of the people are present to witness them.

The Siamese observe a season that may be called the Buddhist Lent, when for three months the priests must not go so far away from their temples as not to be able to return at night. All classes anticipate this season, and provide for them such food as parched rice and corn, also natural and artificial flowers, silvered and gilded trees, and other articles to make their dormitories pleasant and inviting. The day these gifts are presented is called the *Kow Wasah* holiday. Some of the gifts the priests offer to the idol; others they present to their elders and to aged priests in the same temple with themselves.

When the Buddhist Lent is ended and the priests are allowed to come out of the temples and travel where they please, the *Auk Wasah* holidays are observed. In anticipation of their coming out, as of their going in, the laity, from the highest to the lowest, prepare clothing suitable for their wanderings. The kings have numerous priests' robes made of white cotton shirting dyed yellow, which is the sacred color. The people prepare gifts according to their means. The first three evenings there is a grand display of fireworks on the river in front of the palaces, His Majesty honoring the occasion with his presence. The river is alive with joyous, pleasure-seeking people hastening to the scene. Offerings consisting of little skiffs and rafts of banana-stalks are seen upon the river. On these are temples, pagodas and transparencies of birds and beasts, all brightly illuminated with wax candles. They are sent off one at a time, and float down with the tide, beautifully illuminating the river. The people make their own family offerings on these evenings an hour or two before the king comes out from the palace; the floats may be seen all over the city in the river and canals near their homes. When these floats have all been disposed of, the king applies a match to fireworks that have been arranged in boats near, and then are seen trees of fire, green shrubbery and a variety of flowers of ever-changing colors, with rockets and squibs in great profusion.

A few days later commence the *Taut Katin* ceremonies, or the annual visitation of the kings to the sixty or seventy royal temples to perform their devotions and make offerings to the priests. This is one of the great events of the year—a festival season with the people. The temples near the palace within the city-walls are first visited. His Majesty, seated on an elegant golden chair of state sparkling with gems, is borne on men's shoulders and followed by princes and nobles in costly carriages and by other vehicles loaded with presents of various kinds. Then for some twelve days he, with all his princes, ministers of state and high nobles, makes a business of visiting daily some three or four of the temples that are accessible only by water, and after this the second king makes his visits. The river presents a very animated appearance as the boat-processions pass escorting His Majesty. It is filled with barges, slender and graceful in their proportions, each propelled by from forty to eighty natives, who fill the air with their wild outcries as they simultaneously dip their long paddles into the water and then raise them high into the air. First, two by two, will be a score of canoe-like vessels, each perhaps fifty feet long, with a bright crimson awning over the centre and some sixty or seventy men in red uniform; then boats with music preceding the stately barge that conveys His Majesty. This is perhaps one hundred and twenty feet long, besides the gilded stern, which curves gracefully up some fifteen or twenty feet from the water. From prow and stern hang two graceful plumes of long white horse-hair, and between them a small apron-like banner floats in the breeze. In the centre of the boat reclines His Majesty on an elevated cushioned platform, in a pavilion with an arching roof from which hang curtains of crimson-and-gold cloth. The barge is propelled by eighty men with long gilded paddles. Following the king will be a



CARRYING THE KING TO THE TEMPLE.

crowd of similar elegant boats with the princes and nobles. These boats hover near in clusters of sevens or fives or threes, and after them others, till there is a train of eighty or a hundred boats, containing perhaps four thousand men. All this is a splendid sight, but the Christian beholder is pained by the thought that the display is to do honor to a false religion and a false god.

While the kings are thus engaged the common people in city and country are visiting their favorite temples and priests. Families unite, and groups of boats may be seen filled with young men and maidens in their gayest attire, while the air resounds with Siamese instrumental music and the merry shouts of the boatmen as they convey their presents of priests' robes, fruit and flowers to the temple.

The visitation of the temples over, the *Taut Katin* ceremonies wind up with a repetition for three evenings of fireworks much the same as already described.

Superstition and the worship of idols enter not only into the holidays of the Siamese, but into everything they do. "They praise the gods of silver and gold, of brass, iron, wood and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand their breath is, and whose are all their ways, they have not glorified;" "Happy is that people whose God is the Lord."

CHAPTER XIII.

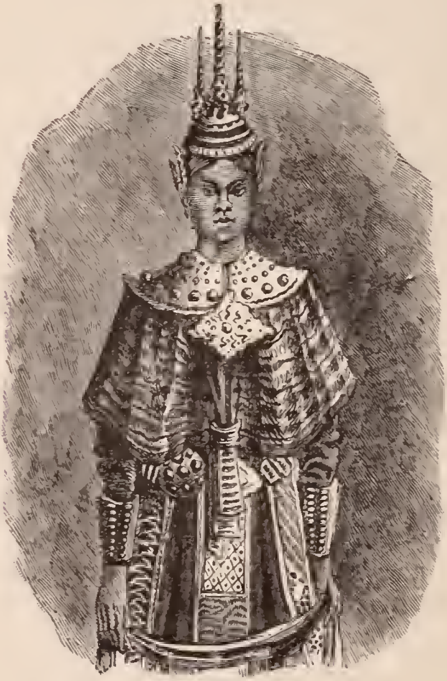
VISIT TO A GAMBLING ESTABLISHMENT.

I HAVE just now returned from exploring a celebrated gambling establishment near my house. It is a floating house occupied by a Chinaman. Chinamen are the master-gamblers of Siam.

All the front of the room in which the gamblers are seated is open to the river. As you pass along you may see them in a brilliant light, sitting in two parties on the floor, and most interested in their bewitching games. Just in front is a little recess on a float, which is occupied by the musicians and play-actors. Here you will at one time hear the deafening peals of the gong, the horns through which they speak making unearthly sounds, then the grating notes of their various stringed instruments, then all together with human voices the most unmusical imaginable.

Between these play-actors and the gamblers there is a paper screen, with lamplight on the side of the performers, where a man is employed in making shadow puppet-shows for the amuse-ment of the spectators, and no doubt contributing to the fascinating power of the gambling-shop.

There are many such establishments down the river, and probably many hundred in Bangkok, which are licensed by government. They afford no small amount of revenue, but they are, single-handed, undermining the pillars of this kingdom. Three days in the year the people are allowed to gamble as they please.



SIAMESE ACTRESS.

This sin will assuredly be the ruin of this nation unless there is a speedy reformation.

NOTE.—"Play usually begins late in the afternoon, and lasts half the night. At one end of a Chinese gambling-saloon is often an altar, and on it a figure of the god of luck. When tired of gambling the Siamese adjourn to the neighboring theatre, where they spend an hour or two watching the Lakons' theatrical performances, in which only girls, as a rule, take part."

CHAPTER XIV.

SIAMESE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF MEDICINE.

NATURE, according to the Siamese, is made up of four elements—namely, earth, fire, wind and water.

The human body is supposed to be composed of the same elements, which they divide into two classes—visible and invisible. To the former belong everything that can be seen, as the bones, flesh, blood, etc.; to the latter, the wind and the fire.

The body is composed of twenty kinds of earth, twelve kinds of water, six kinds of wind and four kinds of fire. The varieties of wind are as follows: The first kind passes from the head to the feet, and the second variety from the feet to the head; the third variety resides above the diaphragm, and the fourth circulates in the arteries, forming the pulse; the fifth enters the lungs, and the sixth resides in the intestines. The four kinds of fire are—first, that which gives the body its natural temperature; the second, that which causes a higher temperature, as after exercise or in fevers; the third variety causes digestion, and the fourth causes old age. The Siamese divide the body into thirty-two parts, as the skin, heart, lungs, etc. The body is subject to ninety-six diseases, due to the disarrangement of the earth, wind, fire and water. Thus, if there is an undue proportion of fire we have one of the fevers. Dropsies are caused by too great a proportion of water, and wind causes all manner of complaints. Nine out of ten of the natives, when asked what is the matter with them, answer "*Pen lom*" ("wind").

The external elements are constantly acting upon the elements making up the body, causing health or disease. Thus, in the hot season they believe we are more liable to fevers, and during the wet season too much water is absorbed, causing dropsy. Earth is supposed to produce disease by invisible and impalpable mists and vapors.

Spirits are supposed to have great power over our bodies, deranging the elements and producing all manner of diseases. The minds of the natives are thus held in continual bondage for fear of the spirits, for no one knows what great sins he may have committed in a previous state of existence for which he may be called upon to suffer at any moment. Thus the people are constantly endeavoring to propitiate the spirits by presents, incantations, etc.

In the time of Buddha lived one still worshiped as the father of medicine. To him it is said the plants all spoke, telling their names and medical properties. These were written in books, and have become sacred. If they fail to produce the effects attributed to them, the fault is never theirs, but the want of success is due to the absence of merit in either doctor or patient. The natives use almost everything as medicine; the bones and skins of various animals occupy a large part of their pharmacopœia, while the galls of snakes, tigers, lizards, etc. are among the most valuable of their medicines. Many of the Siamese remedies are very complicated, being composed of scores of different ingredients.

The following is a characteristic prescription for the bite of a snake: A portion of the jaw of a wild hog; a portion of the jaw of a tame hog; a portion of the jaw of a goat; a portion of goose-bone; a portion of peacock-bone; a portion of the tail of a fish; a portion of the head of a venomous snake. These, being duly compounded, form a popular remedy when the venom has caused lockjaw.

Many other native remedies are equally marvelous, but I cannot mention them. Every native physician has an image of the father of medicine in his house. The drugs are placed in this idol's hand and receive his blessing; afterward they are taken to the patient's house and boiled in earthen pots, a wickerwork star being placed below and above the drugs to give the medicines strength. The patient is usually obliged to swallow many potsful of medicine, each pot containing two or three quarts. If the patient dies, the doctor gets no fee.

The influence which Western medical science is exerting in Siam is shown in the following incident, mentioned in a recent Bangkok newspaper. The young man alluded to is a graduate of the Presbyterian mission boarding-school: "Dr. Tien Hee, who received a diploma from the New York University School of Medicine, where he graduated some years ago, performed a very difficult and delicate operation a few days ago upon a distinguished Siamese official, and we learn with pleasure that the king has since graciously permitted him to practice in the royal palace."

A writer in the same paper gives the following account of a hospital established by the Siamese, and conducted by a graduate of a Western medical college, the same that is mentioned above: "To-day (November 29th) I had the pleasure of visiting the first and only hospital organized and controlled by the Siamese within the kingdom of Siam. It was opened for the reception of patients on the 14th of December. It is a large, airy, two-storied building, situated within the city-walls, near Sampeng market-gate, and has capacity for sixty patients. It is a hospital devoted to the exclusive care of soldiers, and is under the management of a Siamese physician, Dr. Tien Hee. Siam owes the establishment of its first hospital to the energy of one of its most intelligent noblemen, Pra Nai Wai, who completed and presented the building for it to the Siamese government. His Majesty accepted the gift and has promised it his support. It has for its director a cultivated and capable Siamese physician, who will be able to give the patients the benefit of Western medical and surgical science."

CHAPTER XV.

CHOLERA-TIMES IN BANGKOK.

THOSE indeed were dreadful days in the summer of 1849, when, after being free from it thirty years, cholera again broke out in Siam; when in less than a fortnight more than twenty thousand people perished in the one city of Bangkok; when, go where you would in the streets, you would meet men carrying their dead slung from a bamboo borne on the shoulders of two of them; when hundreds of corpses were thrown into the river and heaps on heaps were piled up like logs and burned to get them out of the way.

I need not say that the Siamese were very much frightened when this dreadful disease broke out among them. They saw their friends and neighbors sicken in an hour and dying on their right hand and left in almost every house, and each one feared it might be his turn next. But where did they look for help? Did the king proclaim a fast-day, think you? and the people repent of their many sins and pray to God to have mercy on them? Alas! God was not in the thoughts of this people at all. Their religion teaches them there is no God—no Creator who made the world: the world made itself, they say; it always was. The god they do worship, Buddha, whose images are in every temple, was nothing but a mere man like themselves, and, now he has left the world, knows nothing, cares nothing, about it, or indeed about aught else.

The common notion about the pestilence was that an army of wicked spirits had come invisibly to carry off mankind to make them their servants in the unseen world. Oh, how anxious they were to make these spirits of the air their friends! So the people made various offerings in order to conciliate the good-will of these spirits of the air.

It was a common practice in those days to form a little square tray from pieces of the plantain tree, and, placing the offerings thereupon, leave them by the side of the street, where the spirits would find them, or else, placing them on the water, let them float down the stream. The river and land were full of them.

Coming home one night, I stumbled over one right in my path, and, having a lantern, stopped to examine it. On the rude tray, which was about a foot square, were strewed rice, some coarse salt tied up in a little rag, some fresh flowers, betel-nut, sliced plantain, the end of a torch, and two rough images of clay representing a man and woman, each with a dirty shred of cloth about it. The object in making images was that the spirits might accept them for their servants instead of the persons who offered them. The invisible spirits never carried off any of these dainty gifts, but I have seen sensible-looking dogs helping themselves freely to the rice and whatever else was eatable.

Some would take great pains to make perfect little models of a Chinese junk, painted gayly, and fit them out with little red and white banners, wax tapers, fruit and flowers. These boats contained as passengers clay images of men, women and children, and at dusk the tapers were lighted and the little vessels launched on the river as an offering to the spirits, to be borne away on the tide. Many charms were also used to keep off the evil spirits that bring disease. They consisted of strips of paper with various squares and marks upon them, sewed up in bits of red cloth or leather of a three-cornered shape.

But by far the most common practice as a preventive of cholera was wearing a few strands of cotton yarn about the neck or wrist. Go where you would, in the market or along the river-side, nearly all women and children wore this white string. I have been in the houses of noblemen where one had just been taken sick, when all the women of the family were busy dividing a hank of cotton yarn into portions and tying them around the wrists or necks of themselves and their children with as much earnestness as though their lives depended on it. Often in trying to feel for the pulse of some poor dying creature have I pushed this cotton thread away to get at the wrist.

Many houses were entirely encircled by a long cotton cord, with bits of written paper fastened to it here and there. The outer palace-walls, more than a mile in circumference, were thus girt around, the cord looped up from the battlements every few rods. But Death crossed the enchanted line, if the spirits did not, and hundreds of the king's large household were swept away.

The pestilence had not been prevailing long before the Chinese in the city, at their houses on land and at every floating house for miles along the river and canals, had a tall bamboo pole put up, with cords attached by which a little lantern could be raised to the top. After dark, when all these were lighted, they gave the river a beautiful appearance. This foolish waste of oil was kept up all night for weeks and months. Besides this, the Chinese tried to get the favor of their gods by the firing of crackers, boat-races and processions on land and water.

There were other spirits, besides those that they supposed had caused the pestilence, that the Siamese treated with great respect during those days.

Before or near almost every house, raised on a single pole about as high as one's head, stood a little wooden house, having one small room opening on a little porch. In this porch and room you would always find a quantity of offerings—such curious ones, too, that you would be more sure than ever it was a doll's play-house, yet the grown-up members of the family had built them to secure the good-will of the spirit guarding the spot occupied by their dwelling.

A piece of board shaped something like the head of a spear, slips of cloth covered with written characters, little clay images of elephants, horses, men and women, rice, betel-nut, tobacco and flowers,—these would be offered, in addition to the wax tapers kept burning and food set out, if any of the family were sick.

The worshiping of these spirits is a kind of superstition that appears to have been handed down by the forefathers of the Siamese from the ancient times before the Buddhist religion, which throws no light upon it, was introduced into their country. As the people believe that these spirits can protect them from sickness during cholera-time, the offering-houses are well supplied, and the little sprites (had there been any) would not have lacked tobacco, betel, food and clothing, or clay horses to ride.

The temples of the idols and the priests were not forgotten in those days. The preaching-places were filled with hearers, presents were made in abundance to the priests and there was much bowing to idols. One great man was sure that he could not die of cholera because he had gained so much merit by paying the expenses of making a number of new priests—some three or four hundred *ticals;* but he too was taken away by the fatal disease. Priests were in demand also to chant prayers over the dying, that they might be happy in the next life. I was much affected by seeing a poor mother trying to comfort her son, a young man stricken down by disease and fast sinking. She told him to think of the favor of his god, and then, putting his hands together with the palms touching, as he was too far gone to raise them himself, lifted them for him above his head, as is done in the worship of Buddha. And so this life went out, as thousands upon thousands have done since, in blind groping after its god, and this mother was left, as many, many mothers in that land have been left, without one ray of hope or light beyond the borderland which the spirit of her dear one had passed.

CHAPTER XVI.

SIAMESE CUSTOMS FOR THE DYING AND DEAD.

WHEN a Buddhist prince or princess is at the point of death, the attendants, wishing to give the departing spirit as good a passport into the spirit-world as possible, suspend every other care and address themselves to the work of fixing the thoughts of the dying one upon Buddha. To accomplish this they take turns in enunciating as clearly as possible the name of Buddha generally employed when in health—*P'ra Arahang.*

Whenever the writer has been present at the death of an adult member of the royal family, this has been the name used. It is uttered as often as eight or ten times in a minute. This is done, hoping that the departed spirit will thus be helped to think of Buddha, and that that will accumulate a large fund of merit to his credit which will become of vast service to him in the spirit-world. It would seem to be a service having much the same object as that of the "*extreme unction*" of the Roman Catholics. It is continued from ten to fifteen minutes after the pulse has stopped its beating and the lungs their hearing, even until the body is cold and stiff in death.

When all evidence of hearing is gone the attending friends will raise their voices almost to a stunning pitch, hoping that they may force the departing spirit to hear the name of *P'ra Arahang.* When the most loving friends have ceased to have any lingering hope that the dead can hear them longer, then the continuous and deafening sounds of *P'ra Arahang* are exchanged for the most uncontrollable wailings, which are so loud that they can be heard at a great distance. Then all members of the family, including the slaves in the house within hearing, join in a general outburst of crying and sobbing.

When a prince of high rank has just died, other princes, nobles and lords, in the order of their rank, step up one by one and pour a dipper of water upon the corpse. Certain officials in the household dress the body for a sitting posture in a pair of tightly-fitting short pantaloons and jacket, and over these a winding sheet wrapped around the body as firmly as possible. Thus prepared, the corpse is placed in a copper urn with an iron grating for its bottom, and this is put into one made of fine gold, with an outlet at the most pendent point, and a stopcock from which the fluid parts of the body are daily drawn off until it becomes quite dry. The golden urn is then placed on an elevated platform, while conch-shell blowers and trumpeters and pipers perform their several parts with the greatest possible harmony of such instruments. This act is called *Ch'on p'ra sop K'u'n p'ra taan*—literally, an invitation to the corpse to be seated on the platform.

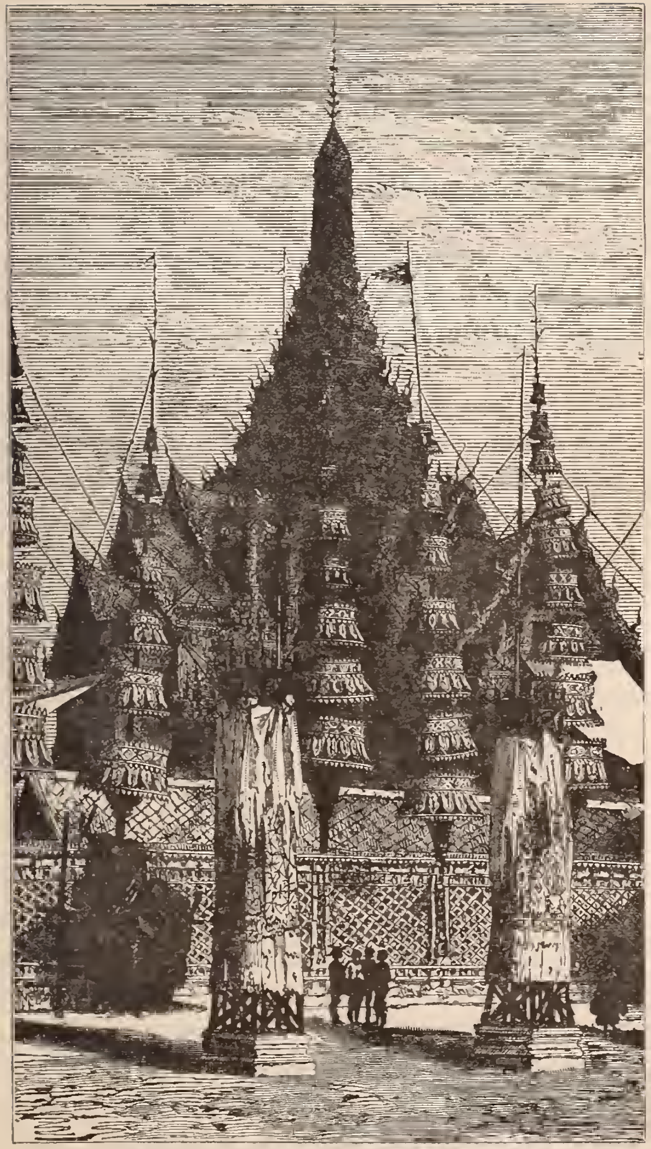
When thus seated all the insignia of royalty which the prince was wont to have about him in life are arranged in due order at his feet—viz. his golden betel-box, his cigar-case, his golden spittoon, his writing apparatus, etc. The band of musicians now perform a funeral dirge; and they assemble daily at early dawn, at noon and at nightfall to perform in concert with a company of mourning women who bewail the dead and chant his virtues. In the intervals a company of Buddhist priests, four at a time, sitting on the floor a little distant from the platform, recite moral lessons and chant incantations in the Pali, with loud, clear, musical intonations.

This service is continued day and night, with only the intervals for the performance of the dirges and mourning women, and a few minutes each hour as the four priests retire and another four come in and take their place. This is kept up from week to week and month to month until the time appointed for burning the corpse has arrived, which may be from two to six or even eight months. The remains of a king are usually kept from eight to twelve months. (In the present case the remains have been kept seventeen months.)

In event of the death of a king his successor immediately begins preparations for the *P'ramene*, which is the splendid temporary building under which the body is to sit in state several days on a throne glittering with silver, gold and precious stones, and then and there to be committed to the flames.

The building is intended to be in size and grandeur according to the estimation in which the deceased was held. Royal orders are forthwith sent to the governors of four different provinces far away to the north, in which large timber abounds, requiring each of these to furnish one of the four large logs for the centre pillars of the *P'ramene*. These must be of the finest timber, usually the oil tree, very straight, two hundred feet long and proportionately large in circumference, which the writer has observed to be not less than twelve feet. There are always twelve other pillars, a little smaller in size, demanded at the same time from governors of other provinces, as also much other timber needful in the erection of the *P'ramene* and the numerous buildings connected with it.

As sacred custom will not tolerate the use of pillars that have been used on any former occasion, new ones must be obtained for the funeral obsequies of each king. These four large pillars



CREMATION TEMPLE: A TEMPORARY BUILDING.

are very difficult to find, and can be floated down to the capital only at seasons of the year when the rivers where they are found are full. They are hauled to the banks of the streams by elephants and buffaloes. The great difficulty of procuring these pillars is one main cause of the usual long delay of the funeral burning of a king. When brought to the city they are hauled up to the place of the *P'ramene* chiefly by the muscular power of men working by means of a rude windlass and rollers under the logs. They are then hewed and planed a little—just enough to remove all crooks and other deformities—and finished off in a cylindrical form. Then they are planted in the ground thirty feet deep, one at each corner of a square not less than one hundred and sixty feet in circumference. When in their proper place they stand leaning a little toward each other, so that they describe the form of a four-sided, truncated pyramid from one hundred and fifty to one hundred and eighty feet high. On the top of these is framed a pagoda-formed spire, adding from fifty to sixty more feet to the height of the structure. This upper part is octagonal, and so covered with yellow tin sheets and tinseled paper as to make a grand appearance at such a height, but it would not well bear close inspection.

Surrounding the *P'ramene* there is a new bamboo fence ten feet high, enclosing a square of more than two acres, with a gate midway on three sides. On the inside of this fence are numberless bamboo buildings, fantastically painted and papered, for the accommodation of the priests and nobles, one side of the square being chiefly occupied with buildings for the king's own accommodation while attending the ceremonies of the royal cremation. These are distinguished from all others by having their roofs covered with crimson cloth, the peculiar horn-like projections at the two ends of their ridges, and by the golden drapery suspended in front and tastefully gathered up to the several posts of the hall.

The whole area is neatly covered with bamboo wickerwork, the slats of which the woof and warp are made being more than an inch wide, forming thus one unbroken bamboo carpet, giving great elasticity to the steps of all who walk upon it.

There are placed here and there upon this bamboo floor multitudes of standards peculiar to the Siamese. Some are like the *Sawe-krachat*, or royal umbrella of several stories high. Some of them are with machinery exhibiting a variety of little paper figures in perpetual action, imaging angels or devils. Here and there you will see a niche with rude landscape views of the lower series of the Buddhists' celestial worlds and of princely dwellings there, with delightful pools and groves and many other sensual luxuries which a heathen mind fancies a heaven of happiness must give its inhabitants.

Outside of the bamboo fence are buildings for the accommodation of officers of the government and others who cannot find room within the enclosure. There are also numerous playhouses for theatrical and puppet-shows, masquerades, wire-dancing, etc., and, more interesting to many, the great victualing establishment for all classes above the vulgar, presenting a large variety of dishes and fruits, well prepared and tempting to the appetite, all freely offered without price at all hours of the day.

Thus much of a bird's-eye view of what may be termed the mere shell of the *P'ramene.*

The real *P'ramene* is erected in the centre of the whole, in the great hall directly under the loftiest spire, and in the centre of this stands the *P'ra Bencha*, or throne, on which the royal urn is placed in state. This is a splendid eight-sided pyramid, fifty or sixty feet in circumference, its base on a floor twenty feet above the ground. It diminishes by right-angled gradations upward some thirty feet to a truncated top, and on its top is placed the golden urn containing the remains of the late king most superbly decorated with gold, diamonds and other precious stones. Some ten or fifteen feet above this is suspended from the lofty ceiling a rich golden canopy, and far up above that is a white circular awning overshadowing the whole. Immediately under the golden canopy hang the sweetest and whitest flowers arranged in the form of a large chandelier.

The *Pra Bencha* is made brilliant by the skillful arrangement on its several steps of the most showy articles of porcelain, glass, alabaster, silver and gold artificial flowers and fruits intermixed with real fruits, little images of birds, beasts, men, women, children, angels, etc.

For illuminating the hall splendid chandeliers are suspended from the four corners of the ceiling, assisted by innumerable lesser lights on the angular gradations of the pyramid.

At the time of placing the royal remains in state on that lofty throne nearly all the princes, chief nobles and officials in the kingdom assemble just after the break of day to escort "the sacred corpse" to its last earthly throne on the summit of the new *P'ramene.*

The golden urn is placed upon a high golden seat in a kind of Juggernaut car drawn by a pair of horses assisted by hundreds of men. This vehicle is preceded by two other wheel carriages, the first occupied solely by the high priest of the kingdom, sitting on a high seat, reading a sacred book of moral lessons in Pali called *App'it'am.* The second carriage is occupied by a few of the most favored children of the deceased. A strip of silver cloth is attached to the urn and loosely extends to the two front carriages. This forms the mystical union between the corpse, the sacred book and their royal highnesses. The carriage behind the one bearing the royal urn carries some fifty or sixty sticks of imported fragrant wood, richly gilded at the ends, with which the body is to be burned. Each of these carriages is drawn by a pair of horses, with scores of men to assist, all pulling at a rope in front of the beasts.

Figures of elephants, rhinoceroses, lions, tigers and fabulous animals, all made of bamboo wickerwork and having on their backs large receptacles for priests' robes, are drawn on small wooden wheels. In front and in the rear hundreds of men dressed in white, with pagoda-form white turbans eight or ten inches tall, purporting to be angels, walk four abreast and carry glass imitation lotus-flowers.

The moment the procession begins to move the shells, trumpets and pipes are sounded and the death-drums are beaten with a slow, measured stroke until the royal hearse reaches the *P'ramene.* By ropes and pulleys the urn is drawn slowly up with much ceremony and placed on the splendid throne, to remain in state at least seven days before burning, the strip of silver cloth extending from the lid of the urn down the eastern and western sides of the pyramid nearly to the flight of steps on the east and west sides of the building.

Then the chief priests of the city and from nearly all other parts of the kingdom begin to assemble, a hundred or more at a time, on the floor of the *P'ramene* in sight of the holy urn, and rehearse in concert lessons in Pali called *P'ang-soo-koon*, which are in substance reflections on the brevity and uncertainty of human life, the certainty of death and transmigration, the sorrows connected with every state of mutability and the blessings of Nipan, where there can be no more change. Having uttered audibly these short lessons, they continue in a sitting posture, with downcast looks, a few minutes, reflecting silently on the condition of the living and the dead, and then retire, giving place to another hundred or more to recite the same lessons. Thus they come and go until thousands of the chief priests and others of lower rank have had the honor; and this is repeated every day while the corpse sits in state and for three days afterward.

All the princes and nobles and royal servants are dressed in white. Every Siamese subject, noble or plebeian, man and woman, bond and free, must then out of respect for the dead have his head entirely shaven.

The multitudes of priests are sumptuously fed from the royal bounty early every morning, and again before noon. Yellow robes are prepared for them at the expense of the king's private purse. To every chief priest he gives a complete suit, and to every other priest some important part of a suit, if not the whole. Besides the yellow robes, the king has also in readiness vast provisions of bedsteads, fully furnished with mosquito-bars, mattresses, pillows, towels, spittoons, betel-boxes, cigar-cases, rice-kettles, lacquered trays, lamps, candles, boats with little houses on them, and other articles which the priests need in their daily calling. These articles he distributes to them every day.

Another performance, usually more exciting than all the rest, is the daily scattering of money broadcast among the thousands that have assembled there for the sport. The king takes personally a very lively part in it. The money and jewelry are usually imbedded in little green limes or small balls of wood, to prevent them from getting lost among the crowd. His Majesty, standing in his temporary palace-door, having bushels of limes at his feet, each charged with one piece of money, taking up a handful at a time, throws them, often so guiding his hand as that some peculiar favorite shall have the best chance in the game—some corpulent prince whom he wishes to set into ludicrous motion by his efforts to catch the flying prize. To show proper respect, every one, whether prince or prime minister or consul or missionary, must exert himself to catch His Majesty's gifts while flying, and must go down on all fours grabbing after them at the feet of the multitude if they happen to fall there. He manifestly enjoys the sport, often laughing most heartily at the sight of the jumping, scrambling and groveling eagerness of his lords to obtain the limes.

Sometimes the limes are hung on artificial trees called *ton Kappapruk*—literally, "trees that gratified the desires of men." They are intended to represent the four trees that are to be found in each of the four corners of the city in which the next Buddha is to be born, and which will bear not only money, but seri-leaf, betel-nut, oranges, clothing, gold, diamonds—in short, everything else that man shall need for his comfort under his reign.

Four men ascend the mound in which these trees are planted to pluck the fruit by handfuls and cast them to crowds of men who stand as compacted as it would seem possible for them to live. Every throw is instantly followed by a universal shout from the multitude and a rush for the prize. And then they surge hither and thither like a forest swayed by a mighty wind. The writer thinks he has seen ten thousand men engaged at one time in this kind of sport. It takes but about fifteen minutes to pluck all the fruit from these trees, and then the game is over. It is a rare thing for a man to catch more than two or three limes.

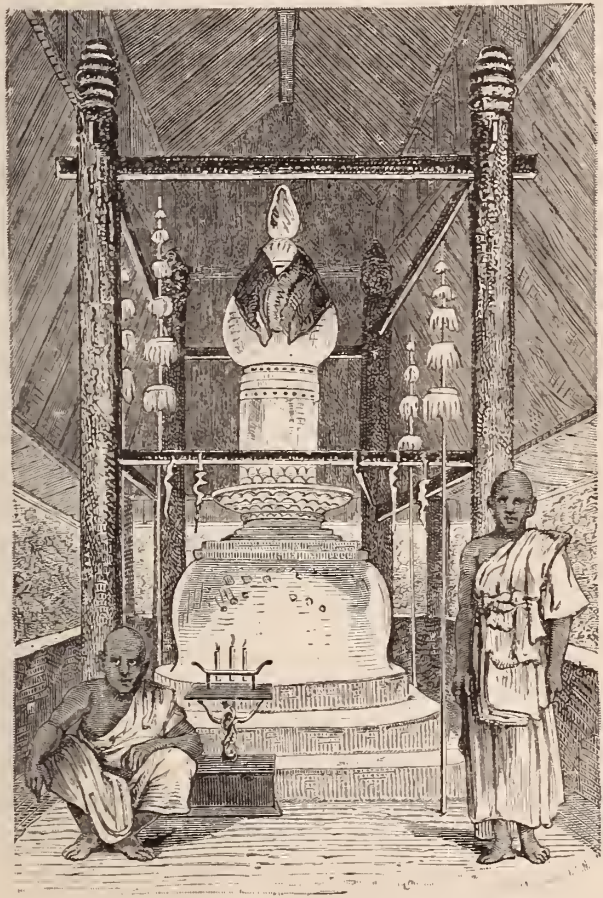
Still another mode of dispensing the royal gifts on such occasions is to divide them into lots, with a slip of palm-leaf attached to each lot and a copy of each on another slip, which, being rolled up or put into the wooden ball or lime, is thrown out by the king to his favored audience. He sometimes adopts a similar mode in dispensing his favors to companies of the chief priests, taking care, of course, that only such things as are suitable for priests are put into such lots.

Sundry Chinese, Malay and Siamese dramas and shadow-scenes are played, and at early candlelight the *P'ramene* is most brilliantly illuminated within and without. About eight or nine o'clock in the evening the fireworks are sent off, being occasionally ignited by the king himself. You first hear the crackling of the matches, then you see the sulphuric fire and smoke running up tall bamboo poles and extending out into branches. Presently a dozen tall trees of fire throw an intense light over all the premises. These quickly burn out, and another flash brings into view beautiful fire-shrubbery. In a minute or two they blossom roses, dahlias, oleanders and other flowers of all hues, and the most beautiful, continually changing their colors like the chameleon until they all fade out into darkness. You are startled by the report of rockets sent up from various places in rapid succession, a hundred or more, showing that the Siamese are not far behind the times in this art. Immediately after this you will hear a terrible roaring like the bellowing of a dozen elephants, with an occasional crash like the bursting of a small engine-boiler. They are the fireworks called *Chang rawng*, which means "bellowing elephants." Suddenly innumerable fire-birds begin chirping, buzzing, hopping and flying in all directions. Some ascend high in the air and burst with a small spluttering report. Mimic volcanic eruptions, attended with jets of ignited sulphur and iron, ascending like waterspouts and falling in showers of red-hot lava, are kept going until fifty or more have been fired.

Before the burning of the body the golden urn containing the corpse is removed from the top of the *Pra Beneha*, and the copper urn taken out. This has an iron grating at the bottom overlaid with spices and fragrant powders. All the precious articles with which the pyramid was decorated are temporarily removed from it, and some eight or ten feet of the upper part of it taken down to form a place of suitable dimensions for the burning. Then the fragrant wood is laid in order in cross layers on the platform, having a bellows attached to the pile. Precious spices and fragrant articles, many in kind, are put among the wood. A gunpowder match is laid from a certain part of the hall set apart for the seat of the king, reaching to a spot made particularly combustible in the pile of wood. These changes are made with surprising rapidity.

All being ready, the king takes electric fire—which had been preserved for such purposes for a long time—and touches it to the end of the match at his feet. This kindles a flame in the midst of the wood. Immediately the next in rank among the princes steps up and lays his large wax candle, lighted from a lamp burning in the same lightning fire, among the wood or on the top of it as seems to him most convenient. The next prince in order of rank does the same, and all the nobles and lords lay their wax candles among the wood. The rank-order is soon lost in the hurry of the many who wish to contribute their candles before it shall be too late. Hundreds of wax candles, great and small, are laid on the wood ere the burning has advanced too far to admit any more.

To prevent the flames from becoming too intense for the safety of the *P'ramene* and its appendages, strong men armed with long-handled dippers are dashing water whenever and wherever required; there are others armed with iron pokers, whose business it is to stir the fire occasionally. The moment the wood is fired the funeral bands strike up their dirges and the company of mourning women set up their wailing. This continues only a few minutes. The time occupied in the burning is not more than one hour.



TOMB OF A BONZE.

The fire is extinguished before all the bones have been reduced to ashes. A few of the remaining coals of the bones are carefully collected and deposited in a neat and very precious gold urn. By the time this is done the sun is set, and the *P'ramene* is left in a despoiled state until next morning. Nevertheless, the hall is lighted and all the usual exercises go on through the night as before. Early the next morning the *Pra Bencha* pyramid is restored to its original splendor and the little golden urn of precious coal is placed on its summit.

All the ashes left by the burning are put in clean white muslin and laid in a golden platter. They are then ceremoniously carried in state to the royal landing, and, escorted by a procession of state barges, attended by the funeral bands, carried down the river about a mile and there committed to its waters.

The funeral obsequies of a king are continued three days after the burning, and the ceremonies are almost the same as those in anticipation of it until the last day. On that day a royal procession is formed, somewhat like that of the first day, to bear the charred remains in the little golden urn to a sacred depository of such relics of the kings of Siam within the royal palace. Very soon after this the servants of the king gather up all the articles which it is customary to preserve for future funeral occasions—viz. the permanent gold and silver stands, the golden canopy and the ornaments of the pyramid. But the timber of which the *P'ramene* and its appendages are made is taken down and converted to other uses, usually the building of Buddhist temples.*

FUNERALS AMONG THE PEOPLE.

These very costly funerals of the royal family and nobility are not possible, of course, among the common people. The priests, however, are generally sent for to attend the dying, and when there sprinkle the suffering one with holy water, recite passages from their sacred books and pronounce the name of Buddha repeatedly.

After death there is a season of weeping and wailing by the family, and the body is then washed and wrapped tightly in white cloth. An urn or wooden coffin covered with gilt paper and decorated with tinsel flowers is brought, and the body placed therein.

Among the people the corpse is not kept long in the dwelling, and instances have been known where the dying one was removed outside on account of the superstitious fears of the family.

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*The ceremonies at the cremation of the body of the late first king lasted from the 12th of March, 1870, till the 21st of the same month. The king of Cheung Mai came from his distant home among the Laos Mountains to be present on the occasion; and the pomp and expense of the ceremony, for which preparations had been more than a year in progress, surpassed anything that had been known in the history of Siam.

When the coffin is carried off, it is not through a door or window, but a hole is cut in the bamboo wall, and sometimes the bearers run around the house two or three times, lest the spirit should find its way back and haunt the premises.

The cremation takes place in some temple-ground where there is a permanent *P'ramene.* But occasionally the dying "make merit" by bequeathing their dead body to the vultures. In such cases the flesh is cut off with a knife and fed to these birds of prey, which haunt the burning-localities in great numbers, and the bones only are burned. Paupers and criminals are thus fed to the vultures or burned without ceremony. All persons struck dead by lightning or carried off suddenly by small-pox or cholera are first buried for some months, and then dug up and burned.

The funerals of the wealthy last several days, and are connected with feasting, fireworks and theatrical displays. The garb of mourning in Siam is white, not black, and is accompanied with shaving of the heads of all the immediate family and their servants.

CREMATION AT BEJREPUREE OF A MAN IN THE MIDDLE WALKS OF LIFE.

[From the *Bangkok Recorder*, May, 1866.]

The corpse was first to be offered to the vultures, a hundred or more. Before the coffin was opened the filthy and horrible gang had assembled, "for wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles [vultures] be gathered together." They were perched on the ridges of the temple, and even on small trees and bushes within a few feet of the body; and so greedy were they that the sexton and his assistants had to beat them off many times before the coffin could be opened. They seemed to know that there would be but a mouthful for each if divided among them all, and that packs of greedy dogs were also in waiting for their share.

The body was taken from the coffin and laid on a pile of wood that had been prepared on a small temporary altar. Then the birds were allowed to descend upon the corpse and tear it as they liked. For a while it was quite hidden in the rush. But each bird, grabbing its part with bill and claws, spread its wings and mounted to some quiet place to eat.

The sexton seemed to think that he too was "making merit" by cutting off parts of the body and throwing them to the hungry dogs, as the dying man had done in bequeathing his body to these carrion-feeders. The birds, not satisfied with what they got from the altar, came down and quarreled with the curs for their share.

While this was going on the mourners stood waiting, with wax candles and incense-sticks, to pay their last tribute of respect to the deceased, by assisting in the burning of the bones after the vultures and dogs had stripped them. The sexton, with the assistance of another, gathered up the skeleton and put it back into the coffin, which was lifted by four men and carried around the funeral pile three times.

It was then laid on the pile of wood, and a few sticks were put into the coffin to aid in burning the bones. Then a lighted torch was applied to the pile, and the relatives and other mourners advanced and laid each a wax candle by the torch. Others brought incense and cast it on the pile.

The vultures, having had but a scanty breakfast, lingered about the place until the fire had left nothing more for them, when they shook their ugly heads, and, hopping a few steps to get up a momentum, flapped their harpy wings and flew away.

CHAPTER XVII.

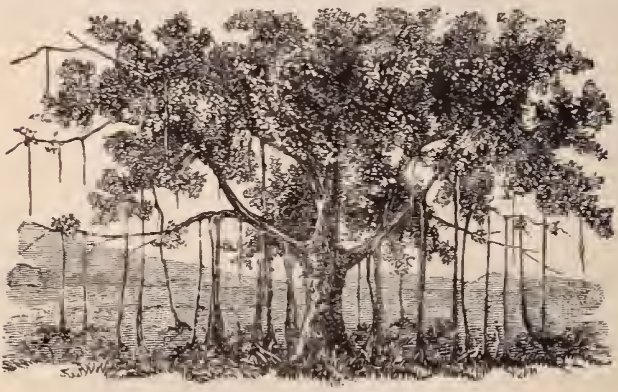
THE WATS OF SIAM.

"On the pagoda-spire
The bells are swinging,
With their little golden circlets in a flutter
With tales the wooing winds have dared to utter,
Till all are ringing
As if a choir
Of golden-nested birds in heaven were singing;
And with a lulling sound
The music floats around,
And drops like balm into the drowsy ear."—MRS. JUDSON.

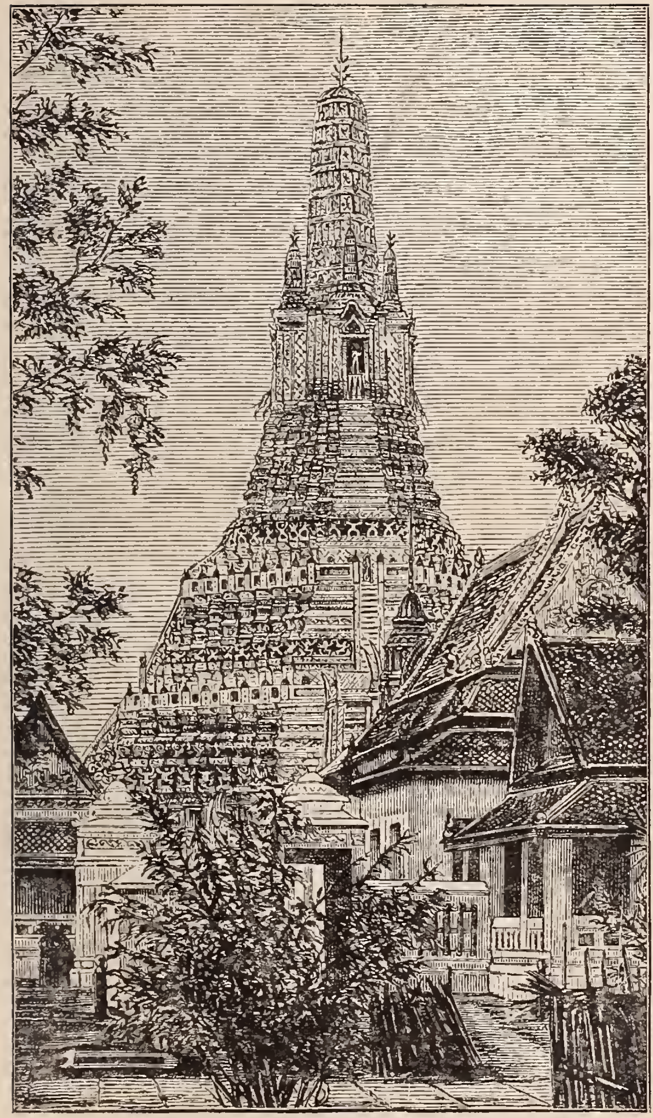
A SIAMESE wat, instead of a single lofty pagoda, as often represented in the pictures of Burmah, consists of a number of buildings scattered about a large park-like enclosure. Let us in imagination visit such a Buddhist temple connected with a monastery—say, one of the largest to be found in any part of the world—in Bangkok.

Starting on such an expedition, at the entrance of the enclosure, generally near the boat-landing on the river, you would find a large garden or rest-house, called by the Burmese *zayat* and by the Siamese *sala.* This sala is made up of two or three open pavilions, according to the size of the wat, erected as lounging-places for the inmates or as resting-places for travelers. It is to the Siamese what the inn is to the American or Englishman, and is often useful to our missionaries in their tours about the country. To build a *sala* is considered a meritorious act by the Buddhists.

You pass the sala and enter an area, generally consisting of several acres of ground, laid out with trees and ornamental shrubbery. Here are shady walks, always hard and smooth, sometimes paved with marble; fruit- and flower-gardens; not seldom artificial grottoes; pools with fish and playing fountains; and miniature mountains. There is also one large tree, claimed to be a shoot of the veritable tree under which Shakyamuni sat when he attained to Buddhaship—the sacred Bôdhi tree.


BANYAN TREE (*Ficus indica*).

"You may remark," says Dr. Eitel, "that the



SIAMESE TEMPLE.

tree before you is by no means a *Ficus religiosa*, but a *Ficus indica*, or it may happen that it is neither of the two, but a palm tree (most probably then the *Borassus flabelliformis*); but the attendant priest who acts as your guide will tell you nevertheless, with a bland smile, that it *is* a *Ficus religiosa*, and that only ignorant and wantonly skeptical persons can have any doubt on the subject. Is there not a plate erected at the foot of the tree stating that this tree grew out of a shoot brought directly from the holy land, cut off the very Bôdhi tree at Gâya?

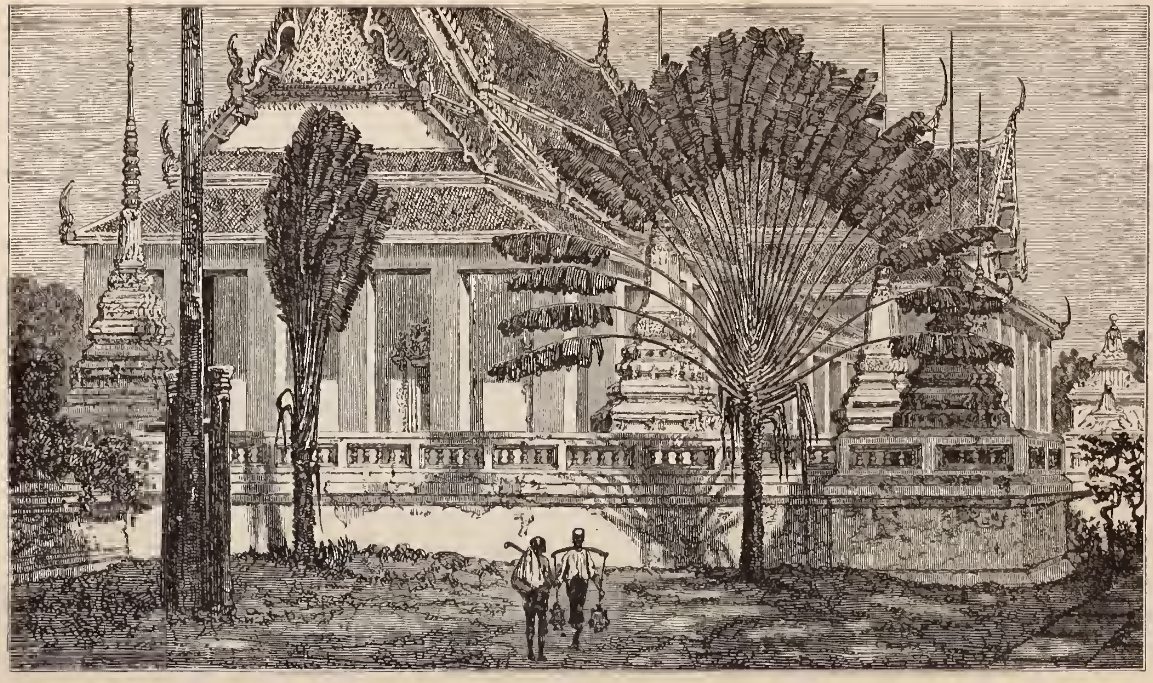
"It is a remnant of the ancient tree-worship that almost every religious sect of Asia has a sacred tree of its own. The Brahmans revered the *Ficus indica*, for which Buddhism originally substituted the *Ficus religiosa*. But in course of time the Buddhists either reverted to the former tree or confounded the two. They were probably led to do so by the intuitive apprehension that Buddhism as it grew and spread singularly followed the mode of growth which is a distinctive mark of the sacred tree of the Brahmans, the *Ficus indica*. It is a peculiarity of the latter that it extends itself by letting its branches droop and take root, planting nurseries of its own, and thus so multiplying itself that a single tree forms a curiously arched grove.

"This is precisely the way in which Buddhism propagated itself. It germinated in India, but sent out branches south and north, each taking root, and each perpetuating itself by further offshoots, whilst the parent stock was gradually withered, and finally decayed. Buddhism left but few traces behind in India, but it still lives in Ceylon and in the offshoots of the Singhalese Church in Burmah, Siam and Pegu. When Buddhism became almost totally extinct in India, the whole force of its vitality seemed to throw itself northward, and it spread with renewed vigor and widening shade over Cashmere and Nepaul to China and Thibet. Chinese Buddhism threw forth new branches, northward into Corea and Japan and southward over Cochin-China, Cambodia and Laos, whilst Thibetan Buddhism pushed its branches into Mongolia, Mantchuria and the greater part of Central Asia.

"Now, in each of these countries Buddhism established separate churches, each having its own locally diversified life, its own saplings, its own fruits, and yet all these many branches from one grove connected with each other and the old withered parent stock in India by a network of intertwining roots. Shivanism and Shananism, which saturated and leavened the churches of the north to a very considerable extent, now influenced the minds of Southern Buddhists. They clung to the old traditions, retained the ancient dogma, preserved their primitive monastic and ecclesiastical forms in languid torpor, but with tolerable fidelity. Yet still, Burmese and Siamese Buddhism under the influence of Brahmanism went so far as to amalgamate with the Buddhist religious notions derived from the primitive tree- and serpent-worship, which was a form of religion not only prior to Buddhism, but indigenous in Burmah and Siam. The consequence is, that practical Buddhist worship there is marked by the prevalence of Brahmanic mythology."

At the cremations, during plagues, epidemics and floods, our missionaries tell us, more attention is given to spirit-worship than to Buddhism proper. During the rice-planting and harvest the favor of the spirits of the air, earth and water is sought. Spirit-offerings may be found in the homes of the people, in the boats, fish-poles, threshing-floors, and even hanging to the sacred Bô tree itself.

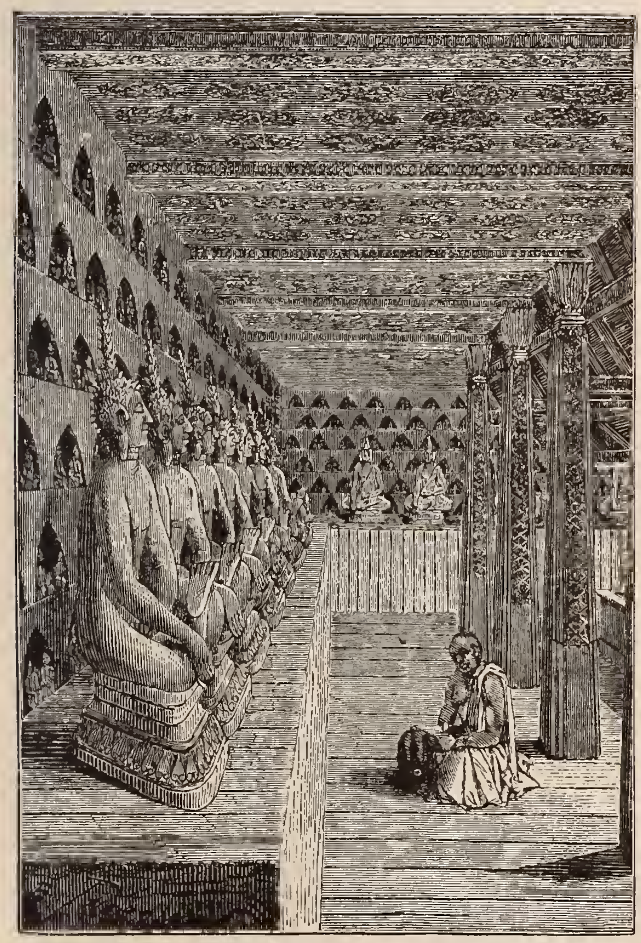
As you turn into the principal avenue of the grounds of a wat you will be very apt to find figures of enormous stone griffins, representing the demon kings of the four regions who guard the world against the attacks of evil spirits; and crouching lions, stone emblems of Shakyamuni (literally, "Shakya the lion"), who is, according to the Buddhists, by his strength the king of the beasts, as he is by his moral excellence the king of men.



TEMPLE AT AYUTHIA.

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 pursuits—chewing betel-nut, smoking, gambling or playing chess; which latter is much the same game as our own, only the powers of the pieces are more restricted. 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.

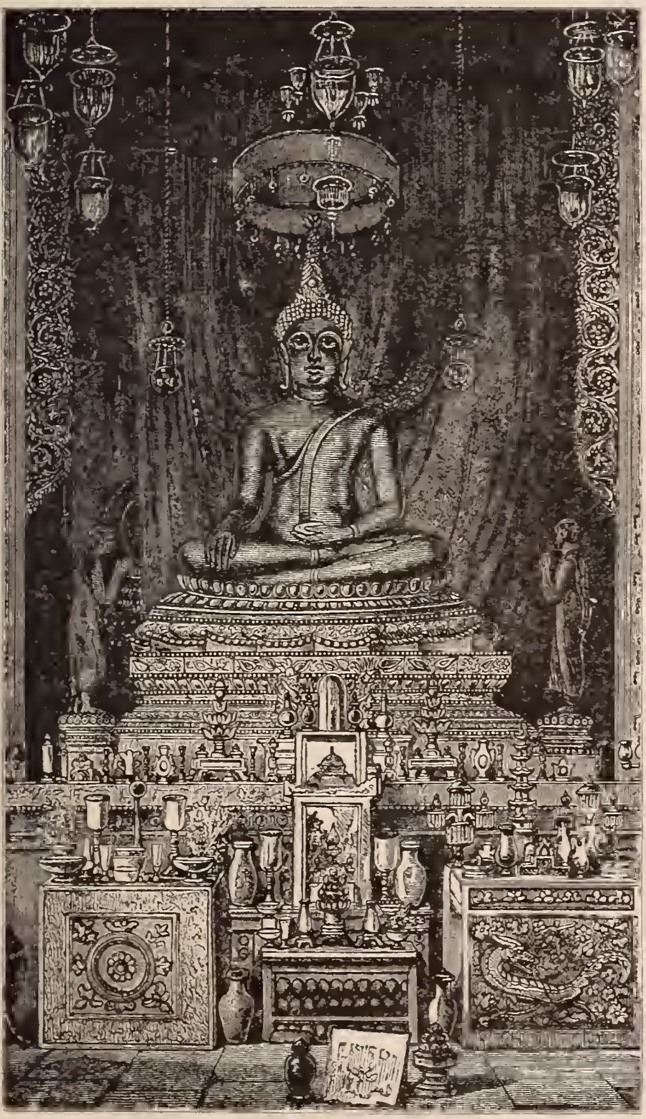
Let us examine the buildings more closely. Passing the first, possibly the second, court, you reach by a flight of steps the wide terrace on which stands the principal temple or idol-house. This court is surrounded by a quadrangular row of cloisters; handsome jars filled with lotus and other plants surround the temple. This is only a large Siamese hall, built of brick thickly coated with white plaster, which at a little distance gives it the appearance of marble. The pyramidal roof, in vertical stages, turns up at the extremities in great horns, and is resplendent with glazed red, green and yellow tiles. The roofs, gable-ends, doors and windows (without glass) are of solid timber, covered in a bewildering way with intricately-cut cornices, intersecting mouldings and fantastic embellishments of grotesque human and animal figures, elaborately



MONASTERY OF WAT SISAKET.

carved and heavily gilded—an art in which the Siamese have considerable skill. The large square room within is ornamented with painted paper representing scenes taken from Buddhist mythology or horrible mediæval-like pictures of their *inferno*, or series of hells.

Entering this building, you see an altar, generally eight or ten shelves high, tapering to a gilded point. It contains many-sized figures of Buddha in the sitting posture, together with a gaudy display of wax candles, incense-tapers, gold and silver tinsel ornaments, offerings of fruit and flowers. Possibly some priests in yellow robes, with burning candles, are chanting monotonous liturgies; more probably, however, no priests are seen, but only people coming and going with gifts to this dead god Buddha. Step nearer. Do not fear to disturb their devotions. Instead of the decorum usual in Christian churches, the votaries are social, and even noisy—one moment prostrate before the altar, the next singing an idle song. Men smoking, women mixing freely with the crowd, neither veiled nor shy. They are the most assiduous in the religious performances, going about sprinkling the images with perfumes and offering oblations of lighted incense-rods, fresh lotus and other flowers, chaplets or artificial flowers, fruits, and clothes of various descriptions. Children three years old go through with their prostrations



BRASS IDOL IN A TEMPLE AT BANGKOK.

before the images with great composure and gravity.

Each country professing Buddhism appears to adopt its own idea as to the shape of its images. Those of Siam have an attenuated figure, comporting with our associations of the ascetic. These images have a complacent, sleepy look, the long ears resting on the shoulders, the fingers and toes of equal length. The best images are of bronze or brass, one large brass idol of Bangkok being a perfect giant in size. There are also silver and plate-gold idols, but the more numerous are a composite of plaster, resin and oil mixed with hair, and, after the figure is shaped, covered with varnish, upon which is laid a thick coat of gilding. Into the composition of the great "sleeping idol" of Bangkok were put thousands of bushels of lime, molasses, quicksilver and other materials, at a cost of several thousand dollars. These idols are not only in the temples, but everywhere—on mountain-tops and caves and in the homes of the people.

In the famous Wat P'hra Keäu (the private temple of the royal family within the palace enclosure, and connecting by a secret passage with the most private apartments of His Majesty's harem) is perhaps the finest specimen of an altar. It is at least sixty feet high, tapering to a golden spire. The shelves are loaded with rare and costly specimens of Siamese, Chinese and

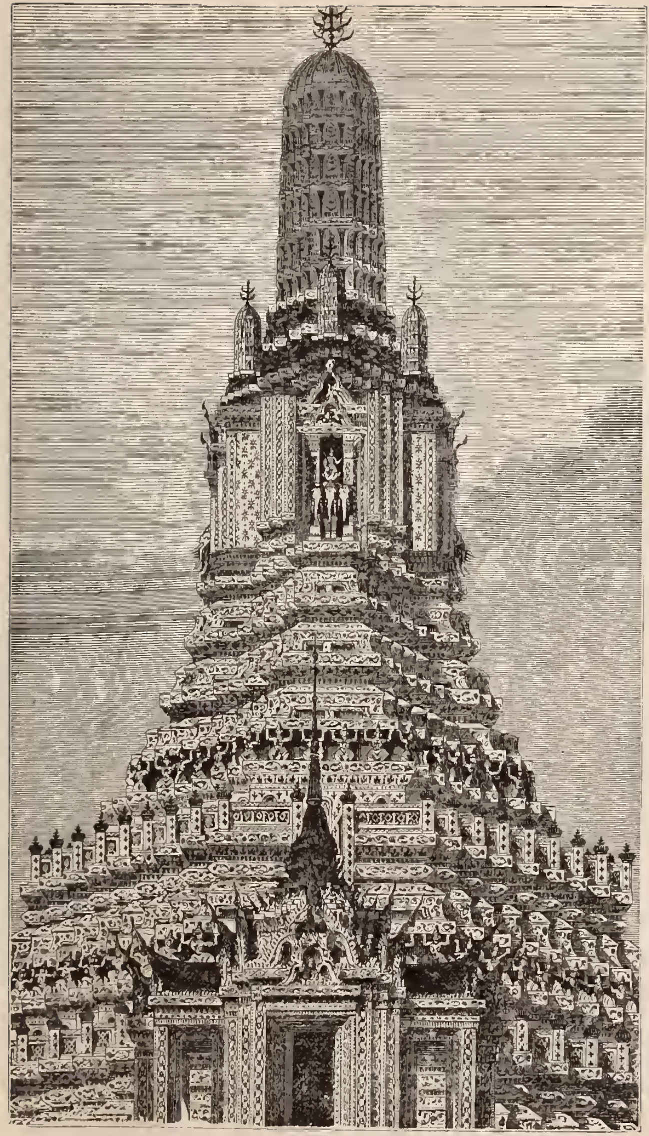
European art—idols covered with plate gold, solid silver vases of beautiful workmanship, golden candlesticks, marble statuary, ivory ornaments, clocks, garments studded with precious stones; crowning all, the beautiful emerald idol flashing with a molten mass of diamonds, sapphires and other gems. This cross-legged statue of Buddha, one foot high and eight inches wide at the knees, is of great value and antiquity.

The kings and nobles of Siam spend large sums on their temples and idols. There are between one and two hundred temples in the city of Bangkok alone. Several cost one hundred thousand dollars, and it is estimated that the Wat P'hra Keäu, with its lofty gilded roof, rich carvings, fine paintings and floor paved with diamond-shaped bricks of polished brass, cost nearly a million dollars.

Such expensive temples and monstrous images are built not only to impress and awe the people, but to make a large amount of merit. *Tam boon*, or "merit-making," is, after all, the sum and substance of Siamese Buddhism. The words are on the lips of young and old, rich and poor, almost every hour of the day. They are anxious to make all the merit possible, believing that their pilgrimage through the forms of animal life and the duration of their purgatorial existence in the several Buddhist hells is the result of *Karma*—*i.e.* merit and demerit. Speaking of the future, the Siamese always say, "*Tam boon, tam kam*"—"according to merit or demerit."

The king makes merit when he builds a costly temple or goes on his yearly tour to distribute presents among the priests of the royal wats. The pauper makes merit when with a broom of small twigs he sweeps the dead leaves from the temple-grounds. The old man makes merit when with painful difficulty he urges his palsied limbs to the wat, and there bows in the temple before an image of Buddha till his forehead touches the floor. The housewife who takes the last mouthful of rice from her hungry husband to feed some lazy priest makes merit. The infant makes merit when the mother, holding its tiny hand in hers, guides the fingers in forming the wax taper that is used in worship.

Pagodas, or sacred spires—detached pyramidal piles of solid masonry, frequently reaching a great height—are always found in connection with the Siamese temples. These are supposed to contain some relic of Buddha, and are sacred to his memory. The most remarkable pagoda of Siam is that in the extensive grounds of the Wat Cheug, opposite the royal palace in Bangkok. Bell-shaped and about two hundred feet high, every inch of its irregular surface is encrusted over with colored and glazed ornamentation, consisting largely of grotesque human and



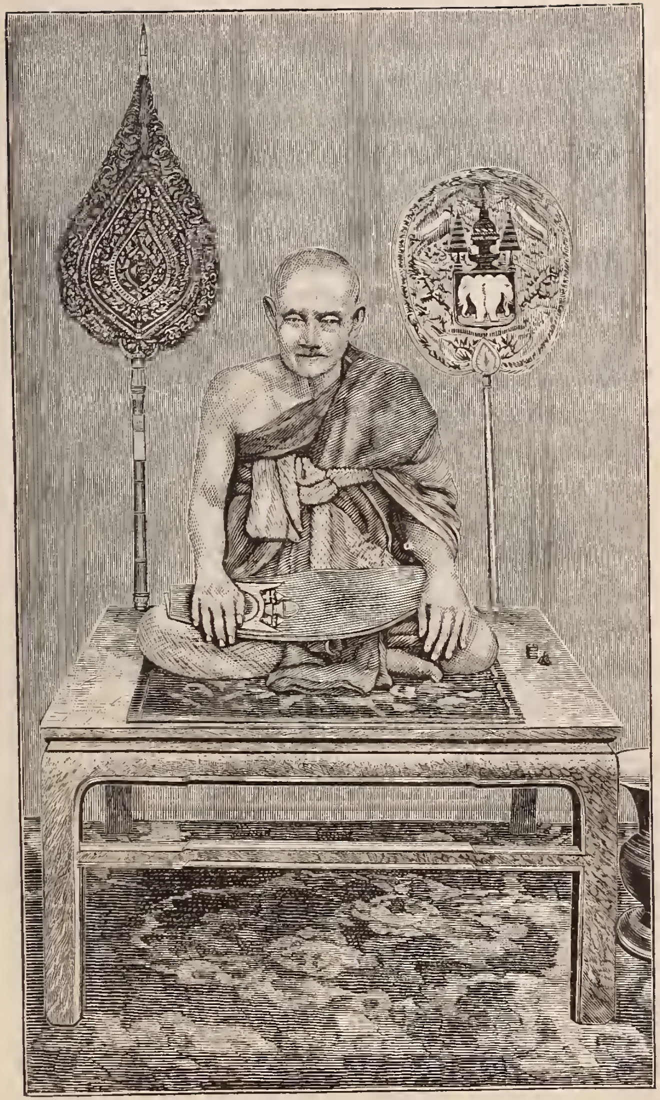
THE GREAT TOWER OF THE PAGODA WAT CHEUG.

animal figures, while from each projection to the very needle-point of the spire hang little bells, a a tiny golden wing attached to their tongues to catch the passing breeze, and all day long thousands of tinkling, silvery voices,

> "As if a choir
> Of golden-nested birds in heaven were singing,"

fill the air with sweet, weird music.

Each wat has also its chapel, or preaching-hall. On the feasts or sacred days crowds of women flock to hear some favorite priest read *Bana.* One day a missionary stopped to rest among the shady groves of a wat, and, hearing the voice of one reading, he entered. Out of a congregation of fifty he found only two men. This is what he saw: A yellow-robed priest seated on his high pedestal in the centre, in one hand a fan to keep his eyes from wandering to things carnal, in the other a palm-leaf book, from which he read sentences of the Buddhist scriptures, written in the Pali, in a monotonous tone, occasionally adding an explanation in Siamese. Before him burned a wax taper. His congregation, seated in a circle on the floor, reverently listened with downcast eyes, their palms joined and heads bowed till the elbows rested on the ground, though much of the service was in an unknown tongue: "Blessed is he who heareth the law." So, reverently listening



BUDDHIST PRIEST.

to the words spoken, they believe themselves blest, nor would they consider the merit any greater if they understood the preacher.

Occasionally, however, there are priests who preach intelligibly to attentive hearers. Ordinary popular preaching is simply extracts from the traditional life and transmigrations of the last Buddha. The facts of his history are briefly, as set forth in the Buddhist writings, as follows:

Gautama, the last and greatest of the seven Buddhas, had appeared on this earth at least five hundred and fifty times (working his way up from the lowest forms of existence, and always exhibiting absolutely self-denying charity) before he was finally born a son of the rajah of Magadha. According to the Ceylon tradition, he would be nearly contemporary with the prophet Daniel, as their sacred writings place his death in 543 B. C. From this period the sacred era of Siam is dated. This young prince fled from his royal father, and, forsaking rank and wife and child, became first a hermit. Later he wandered, in a course of open-air preaching, through the length and breadth of India, and, Southern Buddhists claim, even to Ceylon. By the force of his irresistible eloquence he founded a new sect. Fanatics of all ranks, taking on themselves voluntary vows of chastity and poverty, left their families to follow in his footsteps. He begged from door to door, taught the vanity of life, the terrors of transmigration and of the purgatorial hells, and claimed that his noble fourfold path was the only salvation from this dizzy round of birth and death; that Nirvana—or in Siamese *Nipan*—was the haven of final rest. He therefore urged his disciples of all ages and ranks to turn from other pursuits and devote themselves by a course of meditation, crucifixion of desire and meritorious acts exclusively to this one object—the attainment of Nipan. After forty-five years of such teaching it is claimed he passed into Nipan. Henceforth, for centuries, he has been held up as the Pure One (*Arahang*), and worshiped as the Buddha. Hence the confession of faith of a devout Buddhist is, "I take refuge in Buddha"—meaning that as the sage during all these hundreds of births distinguished himself by a self-sacrificing charity and acts of merit, denying and conquering all the natural appetites and desires, so the disciple bases his system of morals and his hopes of the future on the life and precepts of the founder. "Imitate Buddha; accept his ideas of life; renounce family relations, property, the carnal desires and passions," —this is the one theme of Buddhist preaching.

In Christian lands we speak of "the preaching of the cross;" so the Buddhist, adopting the *wheel* as symbolic of the weary rounds of transmigration, speaks of "turning the wheel of doctrine" as most expressive of the Buddhist idea of salvation—rest or Nipan.

Heretofore, preaching-halls have been bare within, but the present king has lately built a beautiful Gothic chapel after the most approved modern style—stained glass windows, an altar, pews for the congregation, and something that has the appearance of a grand organ, with great pipes running to the ceiling, but, alas! a niche in each pipe filled with a small idol, and a much larger one on the altar. Still, the departure from old customs shows His Majesty's desire for improvement.

Besides the preachings given in wat-chapels, private services are held by the Siamese monks at houses of nobles or some wealthy citizens by special request. The object is to give the host and his family an occasion to make extra merit.

Each wat has also its library, containing the sacred books or Buddhist scriptures. These are in the immediate charge of the priests, and are regarded as the most holy portion of the wat. You will certainly be expected to remove your shoes at the door. Siamese libraries are not what we associate with the word. The Wat P'hra Keäu library is matted with silver wire. In the centre is a large pyramidal chest of ebony inlaid with mother-of-pearl, answering for our shelves, where the books are kept. Most libraries have plainer chests or closets much in the same style. Their collection of sacred books forms a library it would take many men to carry. When a Siamese understands that Christianity is intended to supersede Buddhism, his tendency is to despise the smallness of our Bible as compared with his own sacred canon. Besides, he can produce no mean list of excellent moral precepts, and thinks the miracles of Buddha no whit behind those of the Bible.

The Siamese received their sacred canon from Ceylon. This is the very earliest compilation that history can point out. It was partly reduced to writing, after being handed down orally for several generations, about 93 A. D., and the whole was first compiled and fixed in writing 412 to 432 A. D.

If on a visit to such a library our guide proves to be that *rara avis,* an intelligent Buddhist priest of the reform party (among whom the late king was the prominent leader), he would tell you, as one of the head-priests explained to Mr. Caswell, "Here are two piles of books. The first contains the instructions of Buddha; the second contains the writings of eminent teachers of Buddhism who lived in ancient times. The first pile our party receive as authority in religion; the second we compare with the first; so far as it disagrees we reject it." In answer to an inquiry if they found much to reject in the second pile, the priest said, "Yes, much," and mentioned one whole set of more than five hundred volumes rejected.

Under the influence of these reformers, so far back as 1844, the king of Siam despatched an embassy to Ceylon to make further religious researches in that primitive nursery of their faith. These liberal views continued to spread, following the introduction of printed and scientific works by our missionaries; the more intelligent nobles and priests discovered errors in the geography, geology, and especially astronomy, which necessitated the discarding of much formerly held sacred. Here was planted the germ of disintegration now busily at work undermining this gigantic system of atheism. The confidence of many is shaken in the ethical teachings of sacred books so full of intellectual and moral despair.

But examine this Buddhist collection: see how unlike our books. Here is a bundle of palm-leaf slips from a foot to eighteen inches long and two to three inches broad, filed by strings strung through each end. Notice the richly-gilded edges. Do not these strange characters recall the dots and dashes and curious hieroglyphics of our telegraph-operators? These sacred writings are engraved with an iron style, and black powder is rubbed in to make the impression distinct. After finishing your examination the priest wraps them with reverent care in silk or muslin and returns them to the central ark or closet already described.

Sometimes in the wat library studious priests are found sitting on the floor, each with his book resting on a low reading-stool or desk before him, but they will probably feign not to notice us. Some high priests have fine private collections, including, of late years, English and French standard works.

Ordinary Siamese books are written on stiff paper prepared with black paste to receive impressions from a stone pencil. These are about a foot broad and several feet long, folded zigzag to form pages about three inches deep. When one side is filled the sheet is turned and the subject continued on the reverse side. Some of these books are fully illustrated with colored plates. The characters are written from right to left, and almost all Siamese composition, except letter-writing, is metrical. Outside of the sacred writings the literature is meagre, consisting mainly of chronicles of their own and neighboring countries, dialogues, low plays and inferior romances—usually war or love adventures borrowed from remote and largely fabulous chronicles of their early history: the favorite topic of all is the mythological exploits of the Hindoo god Rama.

But a Siamese wat is not merely a place of worship; most of all it is a monastery. You will find it worth while to glance at the dormitories of the priests. There are often several hundred inmates in a large wat. The ordinary priests and novitiates have usually rows of little cells, almost bare of furniture except the coverlets and pillows and mosquito-nets for sleeping. In others there are neat whitewashed brick buildings scattered around the grounds, putting you in mind of little English cottages. The houses of the abbot and prior are larger. If you call, possibly their apartments may not seem in accord with the primitive simplicity enjoined by the rules of their order on Buddhist priests. Some head-priests now-a-days have foreign furniture, pictures, clocks and other *articles de luxe*, and pride themselves on owning a fairly representative modern library and scientific instruments.

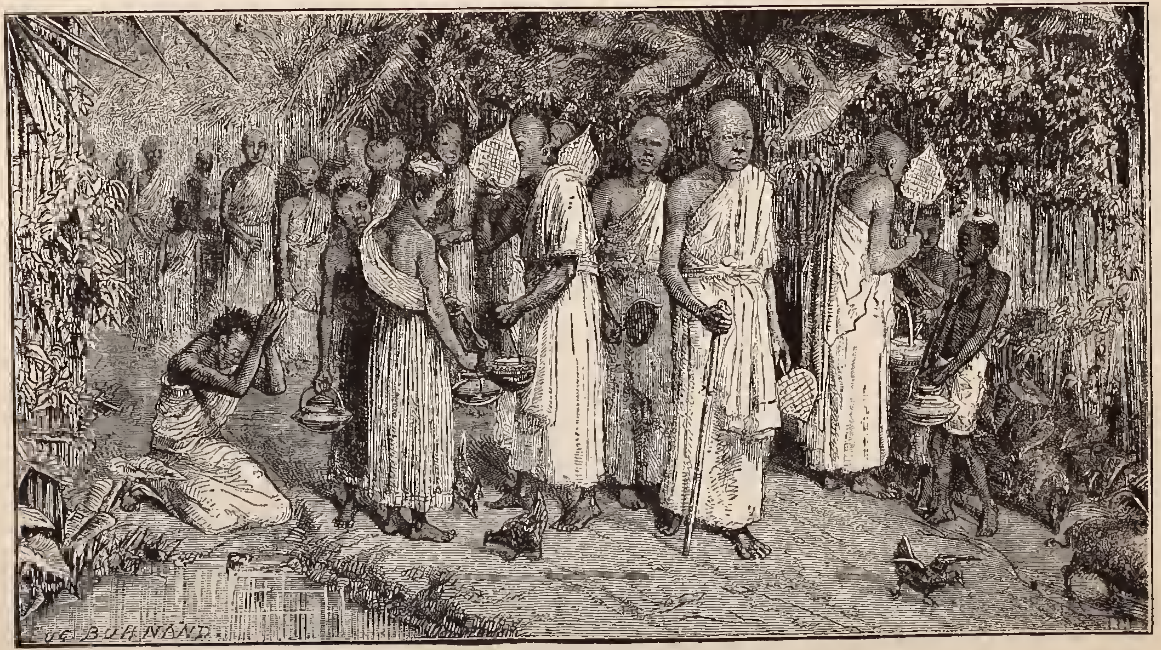
Properly, a Buddhist monk possesses in his own right eight articles—viz. three robes, a girdle, an alms-bowl, a razor, a needle and a water-strainer, this last that he may not unwittingly in drinking destroy animal life. All other articles accepted in charity are supposed to be received on behalf of the chapter. The Siamese monk must observe strict celibacy, refrain from all secular avocations and eat no solid food after the sun has passed the meridian. Priests are easily recognized by their yellow robes and shaven heads. In going about they usually feign indifference to all temporal concerns by walking with measured pace, apparently noticing nothing.

There is no hereditary priesthood. Any male enters a wat at his pleasure, and leaves it without reproach to return to secular life: if married, however, he must be divorced before entering. Every man is expected to spend more or less time in the priesthood, and according to law no one can serve the government until he has done so. Little boys are put into the wats as pupils at a very early age (for each wat is more or less of a public school), and when they have learned to read and write they are ready to put on the yellow robes; so they grow up to manhood, and often to middle age, amid surroundings only calculated to make them idle and frequently vicious men.

There are certain special months for entering and for leaving the priesthood. The shortest period is three months. During this portion of the year the number is much larger, as many leave after a very short stay. The ceremonies of ordination are simple, consisting in the tonsure of the candidate, prayers repeated by the priest, bathing with holy water and assuming the yellow robe—something like the old Roman tunic in shape, with a scarf thrown over the shoulders. Such services are accompanied by the distribution of largess to the priests and the poor—but chiefly to the former—and often by prolonged feasting. To defray the expenses of ordinations is considered an act of merit, and every Siamese spends as much for this purpose as his means will allow. Women make merit by weaving and staining the yellow robes freely distributed on such occasions.

It is the duty of priests to ordain others as priests; to consecrate idols and temples; to assist in wedding and funeral rites; to read the Pali hymns and prayers (of which he acquires at least a parrot knowledge); and to instruct the boys entrusted to his supervision. There are also the *Nains*, or novices, too young to take full orders. Every superior priest has special disciples, who look to him for counsel, prostrate themselves on entering his presence, and otherwise evince profound respect, almost adoration.

In Bangkok alone there are thousands of priests dependent on charity for daily bread. The Buddhist code makes no distinction between prince and peasant in the priesthood. All must eat only what has been given in alms, and when in health each is expected to carry around the alms-bowl. This is slung from the neck and covered with the robe, except when alms are received. It is estimated that it costs Siam twenty-five million dollars annually to keep up this immense army of priestly mendicants and religious ceremonials.



BUDDHIST PRIESTS GATHERING FOOD.

The majority of priests readily acknowledge mercenary motives for assuming the yellow robe. "The wats are more comfortable than our dwellings," they say. "Disciples paddle our canoes; our food and clothes are given us; we are not required to work. Before we became priests the people looked upon us as vagabonds; now they almost worship us." Yet in most instances the only change is the shaven head and yellow robe and the alms-bowl. Some Buddhist monks are devout, spending their lives in wats, or in forests and caves as hermits, meditating on the virtues of Buddha and striving to attain Nipan. Over these exceptional studious and moral monks Buddhism doubtless exerts a restraining influence, yet even such lives are dreary, and manifest little zeal constraining to efforts for national reform.

The ceremonial details of wat-life are monotonous. Monks rise at daybreak. At about seven the streets of Bangkok are crowded with these yellow-robed gentry paddled around with their rice-bowls from door to door. At eight they return to breakfast in a large hall, which, with the kitchen and its enormous rice-boilers, is worthy of a passing look. The last meal of the day is taken before noon. Priests are supposed to devote themselves to meditation and study, but the majority are illiterate and often vicious—"idleness personified." About sunset, assembled for united prayer, their loud singsong drawl can be heard some distance off. The beating of a drum closes the wat-day.

Each chapter is under the direction of a chief priest, and the larger ones have a sort of second chief priest. Their authority is confined to reproof, and in extreme cases to expulsion. They can only enforce the rules of the order.

Wats built by the royal family or nobility are called *Wat Hluang*, or "royal wats." The wats of the people are *Wat Ratsadom*. Church and State are one. The king is supreme in religion as in the government, and appoints two hierarchs—one for the north and one for the south. The title of this high priest is Pra Sang Karat, and he resides in one of the chief wats, and has no spiritual or temporal authority except over the wats and monks. He has an assistant second only in rank. No priest is qualified to ordain without a license from the Sang Karat. Then come the Somdet Chows, from whom the head-priests of the royal wats are chosen—the abbots of the great monasteries, I suppose we would call them. The Tananookans, one of whom assists each head-priest, are next in clerical rank. The head-priests of the common people's wats are called Sompans. Lastly come the mass of ordinary priests, among whom there are Palats and other minor officers, who take a certain rank above the ordinary brotherhood. The

Nains, or novitiates, are not included in the above classes, though they too don the yellow robes, shave their heads and fast as their elders. A lad must be at least eight years old and receive the consent of his parents before becoming a priest. He usually begins his connection with the wat as a pupil, living for some years under the care of some priest who is a friend of the family.

Worldly concerns connected with wats are in the hands of secular attendants clad in white, who also perform the menial services about the grounds and at funerals. We would call them sextons.

Nuns are not numerous in Siam. The profession does not command respect. The people look upon it as a more respectable mode of begging. Those who take such vows are mostly poor old women, who wear white and live in humble huts near, but not within, the wat-grounds.

When the king pays his annual visit to the royal wats, on entering the temple he takes off his shoes, then, lifting his hands containing the offerings above his head, he bows low before the image of Buddha. He concludes by making similar obeisance to the superior priests and bestowing the customary gifts. The chief priests and monks sit unmoved during the ceremony.

No one can be long in Siam without being astonished at the large part which the wat occupies as a social centre in the every-day life of the people. The Siamese traveler rests in the salas. You meet a Siamese woman and ask where she is going; the probability is she is on her road to some temple to make merit with her offerings or by listening to preaching. Go to the priests' quarters, and you find there not only a large proportion of the fathers, brothers and older sons, but mere children of seven and eight years old. The bodies of the dead are carried there to be burned. The people also frequently meet together at the different temples to make feasts and give presents to their priests.

The wats outside of Bangkok, though the buildings are generally of cheaper construction, occupy delightful sites and have extensive grounds. Dr. McFarland, going to Petchaburee, stopped at the sala of a country wat. "We found the grounds," he says, "crowded with men and boys in great excitement, evidently awaiting some unusual occurrence. Presently boats began to arrive and unload their treasures of fruit and depart, perhaps for more. Before our company had all finished their breakfast we found it difficult to keep our place at the landing. We were told that this was a *lakon.* This immense gathering of fruits and other offerings is presented with ceremonies of music and dancing to their god, and afterward the priests stow it away and feast upon it for many days to come. Thus spending the day in amuse-ment, at the same time they make merit for the future. Some things in this heathen ceremony reminded the missionary of the county fairs he had attended in the West, crowds of people—men, women and children—in their richest apparel, bringing their choicest fruit and most valuable articles, but not for exhibition; they come to spend the day in frolic and offer their fruits to a heathen deity."

The Siamese wat embodies "a theory which extracted and remodeled the best ideas of ancient Brahmanism—a religion that has not only been able to subsist for more than two thousand years, but which has drawn within the meshes of its own peculiar church organization, and brought more or less under the influence of its peculiar tenets, fully one-third of the human race. Such a system ought to have enough importance in our eyes to deserve something more than passing or passive attention."

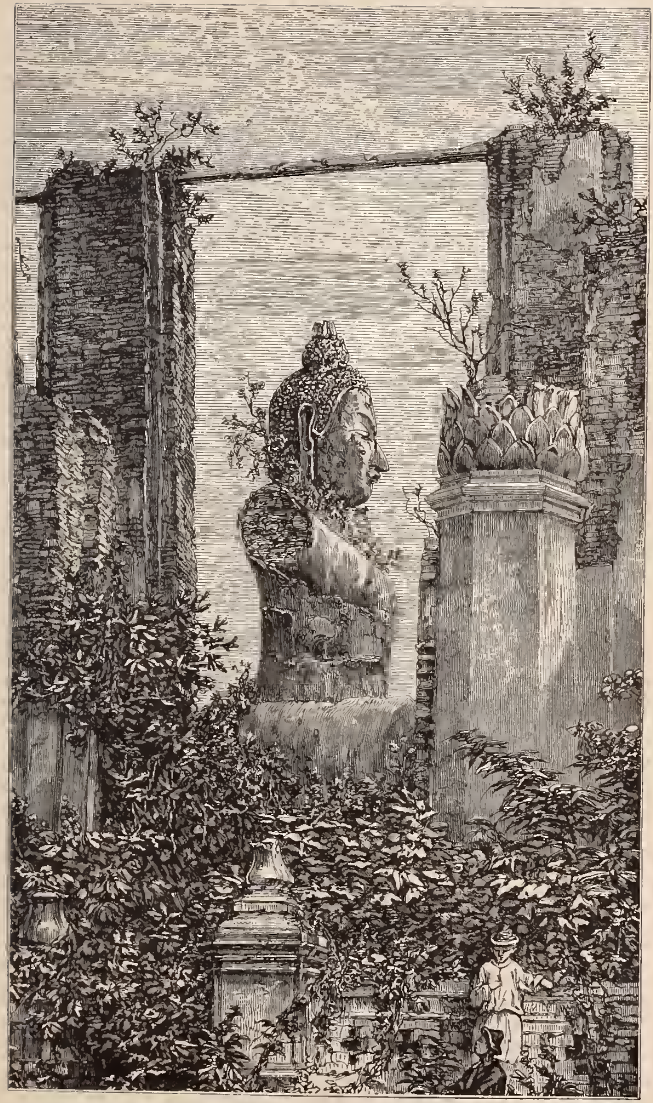
This study of a Siamese wat gives us the practical aspects of this much-vaunted creed in the hands of the common people, proving that the influence of these great centres of classic Buddhism hinders the material prosperity and dwarfs the intellectual and moral development of the nation. Allowing full credit for its good precepts, the visitor who closely studies the actual outworkings of the Buddhist wat finds a worship that degrades; alms-giving that floods the land with sturdy, lazy beggars; a monastic system that encourages violation of the sacred family ties; and in not a few instances hotbeds of vice for the most promising youth of the kingdom.

But Buddhism is losing ground in Siam. One of the earliest signs of progress was a royal order years ago which reduced the vast number of inmates of the wats. On the eve of war with Cochin-China the king, wishing to draw a large number of soldiers, found multitudes had taken refuge in the priesthood. A set of questions was therefore drawn up, and notice given that all priests who failed to pass a satisfactory examination were to be degraded and sent to war at the king's pleasure. Thousands were frightened from their cool, costly wats back to their bamboo huts. It is said four hundred deserted a single wat in less than a week.

Moreover, in the late zeal for reform some principal festivals have been given up. The wat-visitations are now mostly looked upon as national gala-days for popular display, lively music, theatricals and boat-races. The present building of temples and religious ceremonials are far more largely from motives of pride and political expediency than matters of faith. The present king and many of the younger nobles are too enlightened to be devout Buddhists.

Two significant signs may be noted to show the change. "We came," says a late traveler in

Siam, "to the Wat Sah Kate pagoda, situated in a vast enclosure, containing, after the usual arrangement, two or three temples, with huge gilt images of Buddha within, a large building for preaching, the dwellings of the priests and many pavilions for the use of worshipers; but the grounds were in a very dilapidated state. The king had recently turned adrift all the priests, several hundred of them, to earn an honest living by hard work, and so the wat was closed to the public." The other fact is equally hopeful—a new interest on the part of the rulers of the land in the education of the young. Until recently the Siamese kings have spent comparatively little on public works which are common to other countries of Asia—bridges, roads, schools and hospitals—but lavished their treasures on the wats. But a recent letter mentions the latest *in memoriam* of a Buddhist princess: "I wish much I could get you a good photograph of the new school-building, the one that is being erected to the memory of the late queen. As it approaches completion it is looking very handsome, and might be a beautiful tribute to the memory of a queen of a much more civilized country."



RUINS OF A TEMPLE AND STATUE OF BUDDHA AT AYUTHIA.

PART III.

HISTORICAL SKETCHES.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HISTORICAL SKETCH OF SIAM.

OF immense advantage to the Buddhist faith, and equally an obstacle to the development of any other religion, is the fact that Siamese history, on being traced back beyond the middle of the fourteenth century, becomes chaotic and obscure, affording abundant opportunity to the priests to fabricate any ingenious theories which they may desire. By a splendid piece of flattery they have taught the Siamese sovereigns that they are lineal descendants of Buddha, and that the people themselves have sprung from his first disciples. Thus ruler and people are alike interested in the support of a religious system which is identified with their own origin. Through all the early periods of their history the miracles of Buddha are interspersed with a lavish hand. Ancient matrimonial alliances of the Siamese princes with all other leading monarchs of the world, and imposing embassies and fabulous wars with neighboring countries, and no end of marvelous legends of a mythological character, are also woven into the doubtful narrative.

The best historian that the country has had was the late king, father of the present ruler, who, owing to a usurpation of his rightful sovereignty by an elder and illegitimate brother, was led to spend some years in a Buddhist monastery, where he gave himself to study and became, under the circumstances, a rather remarkable scholar. According to his authority, King Tuang as early as A. D. 457 introduced the Siamese alphabet, which he handed over to a conclave of Buddhist priests. His reign was distinguished by the possession of a white elephant with black tusks! —a very important fact from a Siamese point of view.

Authentic history, however, begins with A. D. 1350, from which date the succession of kings is directly traced. The ancient capital of Ayuthia, which was then established, occupied the site of a still more ancient ruined city. There had been frequent wars with the Laos and the princes of Pegu, involving an obscure succession of dynasties.

For about two hundred years the kingdom enjoyed peace, and Ayuthia became a great and wealthy capital. In 1556, however, the king of

Pegu again conquered the country, though upon the death of the king the Siamese princes, to whom the throne properly belonged, regained the power.

About the middle of the seventeenth century the country received a great impulse in civilization from a Greek merchant, Constantine Faulkon, who through skill and success in business and his general public spirit, became a great favorite of the king and his court, and who seems to have devoted himself to the introduction of European improvements of every kind. He received from the king the highest titles, with great power and influence. Under his direction forts were built on the banks of the Menam and new palaces were erected. He also built a church, the ruins of which still exist. He greatly improved the canal system, which is almost as important to Bangkok and Lower Siam as that of Holland is to it. Aqueducts were constructed also for supplying the city with water from the neighboring mountains. At length, becoming an object of envy on the part of Siamese officials, he was assassinated.

In 1759 the king of Burmah with an immense army laid siege to Ayuthia, which, after two years, was compelled to surrender. The king was slain, and a long struggle followed, after which, in 1767, the Burmese, having gained complete possession of the country, appointed a king of Peguan origin to hold the sceptre. By this time the country was full of armed bands of outlaws, who, like the Saxons under the Norman Conquest, proved irrepressible, and after the withdrawal of the Burmese army anarchy bore sway.

AN AMBITIOUS CHINAMAN ON THE SIAMESE THRONE.

Among the leaders of these robber-bands was a shrewd and valiant Chinaman bearing the name of Pin Tat. This man, at the time thirty-three years of age and of unbounded ambition, rose by a series of military and civil promotions to the very highest influence. What his sword could not achieve in battle his *finesse* and bribery completed. Betraying the high trusts reposed in him, and gathering to his standard all available robbers and pirates, he was enabled to dictate terms to the government until he gained possession of all the northern districts. He then marched with a large force against the Burmese governor of Bangkok, whom he surprised and put to death, availing himself of his treasures as his "sinews of war."

He was now strong enough to overcome the Burmese at every point; and so thoroughly did he succeed in ridding the country from their thraldom that he won the gratitude of the people, who gladly favored his assumption of royal authority. He displayed great genius in the administration of affairs, colonized and rebuilt the devastated districts of the country, and, profiting by a sanguinary war between China and Burmah, conquered new territory on the north. It was during his reign that the Siamese power was extended far down the Malay Peninsula, whose governor he captured, and finally, through a matrimonial alliance with his daughter, placed him in power as a tributary. This remarkable Chinaman, after a reign of fifteen years under the title of Phya-Jak, sank into a state of melancholy, and was assassinated in 1782.

In the early part of the present century the English endeavored to negotiate a treaty with Siam, but with little success, and it was not until 1826 that negotiations in that direction were crowned with success. It was soon after that the first Protestant missions were established. We find Dr. Gutslaf in Bangkok in 1828, where he finished the translation of the New Testament into Siamese. In 1830 he revisited Siam, and translated a part of the Scriptures into the languages of Cambodia and the Laos. The American Baptists founded their mission to the Chinese in Siam soon after. The Presbyterian mission was founded in 1840, and that of the American Board (since discontinued) in 1850.

The Roman Catholics had gained a footing previous to 1780, but in that year they were expelled on pain of death. They gradually reappeared. In 1851 the illegitimate brother of the late king, who had usurped his power as related above, died, and the rightful prince, Chao Phra, ascended the throne under the name of Somdet Phra. His taste for learning led him also to adopt a more enlightened policy with respect to other nations. The French Catholic bishop Pallegoix at once addressed to him a letter of congratulation, and presented him with a portrait of Napoleon III., then President of the French Republic. In return for this courtesy the king revoked the decree of banishment against the Catholics, and in 1852 sent voluntary messengers to Napoleon and to the pope. To the latter he sent an autograph letter *written in English.* At the same time this enlightened king employed an English governess to instruct his children. The progressive character of the present king is undoubtedly due in part to the influences under which his education was conducted.

The French have continued to exert considerable influence, perhaps the English still more, while for the Americans the king has expressed his respect more fully than for any others.

Not one half century ago Siam was sealed against the entrance of all foreigners, whether as traders or missionaries. To-day she is in treaty relation with all Christian countries, and the present king desires that these treaty relations shall be most faithfully observed. In the city of Bangkok there are large business-houses conducted by foreign merchants. The flags of all countries float over the city. Steam rice-mills are developing rice-culture: steam saw-mills are creating a large trade in valuable lumber. Foreigners are also beginning to erect steam-mills in other parts of the land. Good inducements are offered to foreigners to enter the various departments of trade, and full protection is given.

The king of Siam has been classed among the most humane and liberal of heathen monarchs. He has manifested his desire in many ways for the improvement of his country and people. Near his palace in Bangkok may be found a large substantial building known as the "Royal Mint," furnished with improved machinery from Europe. It furnishes beautiful copper coins, a good substitute for the little shells and pieces of lead used as money a few years ago; also handsome silver coins, a decided improvement on the round, bullet-shaped silver coins of the last reign. Near this mint may be found comfortable barracks for the royal soldiers, and near this the Royal Museum, containing much of interest from the countries of the world. This institution has an educational influence, for its doors are open a few days in each year to all the people in the kingdom.

The king has also short telegraph-lines, and is now surveying and negotiating for telegraphic communication with the outside world. A line is proposed over to British Burmah, and another over to Saigon in French Cochin-China.

The king has also issued an order for a postal system [since carried into effect]. In the mandate are these words: "His Majesty the king observes that the commerce of the capital and provinces of Siam is greatly in excess of former times, and that whatever is a means of advancing the happiness and prosperity of the people will tend to the national glory. His Majesty has determined to foster the commerce and welfare of the people, that they shall be ever progressive." Orders have been issued for directories, numbers on houses, etc., etc. We may therefore hope that Siam will soon be in the postal union of the world and abreast with the age.

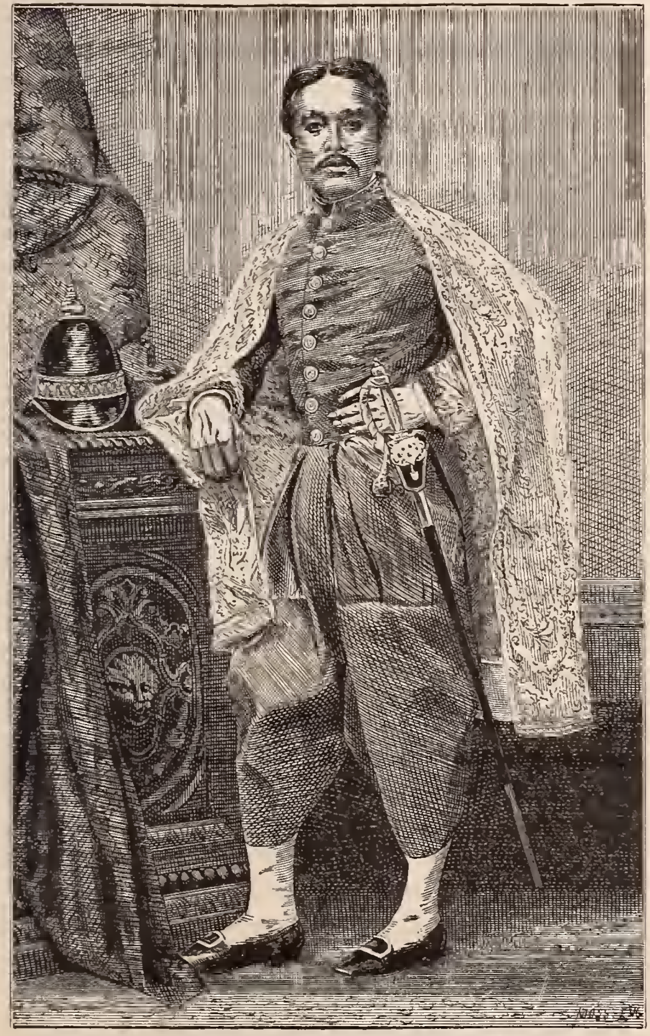
In 1882, Siam had its centennial celebration of the establishment of Bangkok as capital. The king in his annual speech, made the previous October, said: "The exhibition will be given so that the people may observe the difference between the methods used to earn a living one hundred years ago and those now used, and see what progress has been made, and note the plants and fruits useful for trade and the improved means of living. We believe this exhibition will be beneficial to the country."

The king also desires the education of Siam's people, as manifest in his establishing a college under the guidance of one of our missionaries as minister of public instruction. A general educational system may be expected.

THE BANGKOK CENTENNIAL.

Miss Mary Hartwell of Bangkok describes the centennial anniversary of the establishment of the present dynasty and of that city as the capital. These two events were celebrated by an exhibition in which was shown the progress made during the century in the various arts and manufactures:

"Nothing in the late Siamese Exposition was more significant than its school-exhibit. The Royal College was solicited to make an exhibit representing the work done in the school. This consisted chiefly of specimens of writing in Siamese and English, translations and solutions of problems in arithmetic, the school-furniture, the text-books used, and the various helps employed in teaching, such as the microscope, magnets, electric batteries, etc. The Siamese mind is peculiarly adapted to picking up information by looking at things and asking questions, and it is believed that this exhibit will not only enhance the reputation of the college, but give the Siamese some new ideas on the subject of education.



ATTACHÉ OF SIAMESE EMBASSY: COURT COSTUME IN 1883.

"Miss Olmstead and I, together with our assistant, Ma Tuen, have been training little fingers in fancy-work, or rather overseeing the finishing up of things, to go into the exhibition. April 25 we placed our mats, tidies, afghans, rugs, cushions, needle-books, edgings, work-bags and lambrequins in the cases allotted to our school in the Queen's Room, and on the 26th we were again at our post as exhibitors to receive His Majesty the king and give him our salutations upon his first entrance at the grand opening. While we were looking for him in one direction he suddenly entered from another, followed by his brothers and other members of his court and the consular dignitaries. We did not see him until he had walked up the long and magnificent hall and was within half a dozen paces of us. He was dressed in a perfectly-fitting suit of navy-blue broadcloth, without any gaudy trappings, and never did he wear a more becoming suit. His face was radiant with joy, and his quick, elastic step soon brought him to us. He uttered an exclamation of pleasure at seeing us there, shook our hands most cordially, took a hasty survey of our exhibits, and then cried out with boyish enthusiasm, 'These things are beautiful, mem; did you make them?'—'Oh no,' I responded; 'we taught the children, and they made them.'—'Have you many scholars?' was his next question.—'About thirty-one,' I answered. Turning again to the cases, he exclaimed emphatically, 'They are beautiful things! and I am coming back to look at them carefully—am in haste now.' And off he went to look at the other unviewed departments. Since then we see by the paper published in Bangkok that His Majesty has paid the girls' school of Bangkok the high compliment of declaring himself the purchaser of the collection, and has attached his name to the cases.

"The centennial is voted a success by all. There are fifty-four departments, and each is handsomely arranged, reflecting great credit upon the Siamese. The Queen's Room is the richest and grandest of all. It is devoted to the royal jewels—that is, all such as are owned and worn by the queen and princesses; clothing made of gold-lace cloth and gold-embroidered cloth of heavier but fine texture; embroidery on satin, such as cushions, curtains and bed-spreads; embroidery in worsteds; vessels of gold, silver and a combination of gold and copper, fine carved work in ivory and artificial flowers of gold and silver. The royal jewels are arranged on a pyramid about ten feet high and shut in by a glass cover. The whole is placed under a pagoda of bright blue, trimmed with white, which spreads out over it, but does not hide the jewels. The latter consist of rings, anklets, bracelets, ear-jewels and necklaces. The collection of these diamonds, emeralds and other precious stones is valued at five million dollars, to say nothing of the gold lunch-baskets eighteen inches in height and as much or more in circumference, the solid gold soup-dishes and ladles, the tea-pots, betel-trays, meat-dishes and a thousand other things made of the same precious materials, and many of silver also. This magnificence is beyond description in such narrow limits as a letter. Scarlet and gold are freely mingled in cloth, and everything is gorgeous that meets the eye in that room. The exhibition buildings radiate from a high domed theatre in the central part of the grounds, and these again have halls crossing their extremities, in the form of our Capitol. The Queen's Room and the one adjoining, decorated constantly with fresh-cut flowers (under the supervision of the queen's sister, herself also a wife of the king), are the only rooms enclosed with substantial teak-wood boards alternating with ornamental glass windows, the whole forming nicely-finished and beautiful walls. The second king's department is next in beauty of finish, and then come those of the highest princes. All have vied with each other in their attempt to make the finest show. On Friday preceding the opening the king dedicated a monument to the founder of the present dynasty, and one to some other dead man (I forget his name), and they had a wonderful procession. The king was borne in state on a royal litter, and was dressed in his suit of gold-cloth and wore his crown of gold and diamonds. He looked just like an idol. He had to sit so erect and still, he appeared almost as motionless as the images you see in the pictures of the idol gods, except that with his left hand he dipped silver coins out of a bowl of solid gold which was fixed on the post of the litter and threw them broadcast with his right hand at intervals. How the children and common people did struggle to obtain those little coins! The procession was made up of soldiers from the cavalry, artillery and infantry, and there were also many bands of soldiers equipped with the spear, the battle-axe, the bow and arrow, and all sorts of ancient weapons such as were used a hundred years ago. I think that was a proud day for the king, but if I could judge from his face, the opening day of the Centennial Exhibition was the proudest, happiest day of his life. His face beamed with joy, and every word, look and movement denoted keen satisfaction with all his eyes beheld. We are praying that good results may follow—far better than His Majesty anticipated."

RECENT EVENTS.

[From the *Siam Weekly Advertiser*, September 22, 1883.]

"His Majesty, the king of Siam, has graciously responded to the appeal in behalf of the Netherlands India sufferers [from the volcanic eruptions and earthquakes in Java] by sending a telegraphic despatch of sympathy to the governor-general and a donation of $4800. Her Majesty, the queen of Siam, has likewise most graciously given a donation for the same purpose of $4200.

"The line of telegraph from Bangkok to Saigon in French Cochin-China, recently completed, which on the 16th of July last put Siam in immediate communication with the rest of the world, is working most successfully, as is also the local mail system, which this progressive ruler has just established in the capital of his dominions. Of these he speaks in his royal speech in reply to the congratulations tendered him on his thirtieth birthday, September 21, 1883:

". . . 'This year has been especially marked by the opening of telegraphic communication *viâ* Saigon with Europe and the world. We are well pleased by the energy with which our commissioners and the provincial officers labored in erecting this line, and we gladly take occasion to thank the government of French Cochin-China, the consulate of France at Bangkok and the French engineers who assisted in its construction.

"'Our commissioners and provincial officers have also with great rapidity set up a line to the frontier of Tavoy, and when the British portion is completed, next season, we shall be doubly linked to the telegraph-lines pervading the world.

"'The post-office now delivers letters with regularity throughout the capital and its suburbs. The use made of it has surprisingly exceeded our expectations, as we did not think that Siamese would write so many letters. We are now most desirous to extend the postal service throughout Siam to the great advantage of trade and good government, and when that is done we hope, as invited by the postmaster-general of Germany, to extend our correspondence through the world by entering the postal union.'"

CHAPTER XIX.

MISSIONARY LADIES IN THE KING'S PALACE.

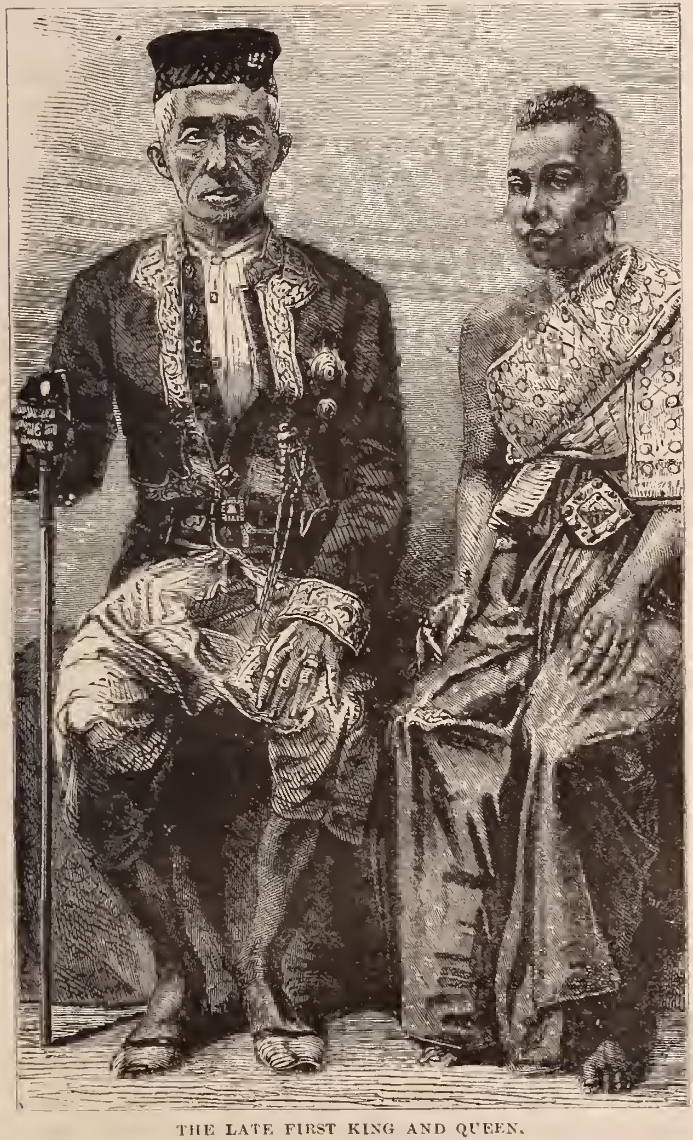
PAINT to your fancy a village of curious Oriental houses, with a high, thick wall, three miles in circuit, surrounding it. In this village, or miniature city, are the king's quarters. Here are temple-grounds with their temples and idols and all their rich adornings, whither people of many generations have gone to worship at shrines which their own hands have made. Here are the dwellings of the king's wives and the residences of the princesses, old and young, who cannot be allowed to marry beneath their royal rank. Each lady has a separate house and has her retinue of servants—all women. There is also a market, conducted entirely by women. The census of the dwellers in this palace was once taken, and it amounted to three thousand females. This included the king's wives, princesses with their servants, the market-women and the female officers of the court.

In 1851 the priest-prince came to the throne. He was the son of a queen, and he looked upon his older brother (the son of an inferior wife, and who had gained possession of the throne) as a usurper. Rumor had it that he entered the priesthood that he might avoid bowing down before his brother the king. However this may be, he assumed the yellow robes and shaven head and entered a wat, where he gained the eminence of high priest. There he remained during his brother's reign. In the wat he gave himself up to study, in which he made great proficiency, considering his circumstances. In his brother's reign the Christian missionaries were kept under strict surveillance, and were not allowed to obtain homes anywhere in the kingdom excepting in Bangkok, the capital. The priest-prince frequently visited them in their homes, and became familiar with their work and learned the object of their coming to Siam. He took up the study of the English language, and for a time employed the Rev. Mr. Caswell, one of the missionaries, as teacher, giving him in turn the privilege of preaching in his wat-grounds. I recall some of his visits to us. One evening he was attracted by the picture of a tree which I had carefully drawn with my pencil while in America, and which had been beautifully touched up by my accomplished teacher. It hung upon the dark teak-wood wall of our drawing-room. He seemed surprised that with the hand and a mere pencil a picture could be made so much like a fine engraving. We gave him the picture. One night he came to one of our mission-homes where there was a prayer-meeting. He remained until it was over, and, accepting a hymn-book, followed the words of the hymn sung.

He was attracted by the word "redemption," and when the prayers were over he said to one near him, "Redemption? What is it?" It was a new English word to him, and he wished to know its meaning, but the way he put the question seemed striking: "*Redemption? What is it?*" May each one who reads this know experimentally what *redemption* is!

Now, these years in the wat, when the prince could spend his time in study and improve his mind by mingling with the good and true, both in books and out of them, prepared him for a great advance when he came to the throne. The courtiers and nobles of the kingdom determined his succession, and when his brother passed away his yellow robes were laid aside for the robes of the prince and he was borne to the king's quarters.

When his coronation was over and he was firmly seated in power he ordered an invitation which surprised us all. Missionary ladies were invited to go to his palace and teach his royal household in the English language. We considered this a providence which could not be passed lightly, although we could not expect these ladies, so accustomed to easy leisure, to



THE LATE FIRST KING AND QUEEN.

make much progress in a language so difficult as the English.

It was decided that Mrs. Bradley of the American Missionary Association, Mrs. Smith of the Baptist mission, and Mrs. Mattoon of the Presbyterian mission, should commence this unique work. They arranged for each to go to the palace two days in the week. These visits were continued for about three years, and in pleasant harmony did this trio of ladies pursue their work.

The palace is on the left bank of the beautiful river Menam. Near the bank of the river is a large, curiously-roofed open house. From our boats we ascend a flight of steps and enter it. Passing through its spacious area, we go into an avenue with high, thick walls, in which are heavy gates. At the end of this avenue we come to the great heavy front gate of the palace. Inside are open salas, with platforms and screens, where the gatekeeper (an elderly woman) and a company of women and children are assembled every day.

Our appointments were all in order. A female officer, Chow Roon Tum Nuk Mai, had been ordered by the king to prepare for our reception. At the river-house we were met by an elderly servant, who received our basket of books and whatever we had to carry, and led us through the windings of the way to our appointed place of teaching—through the river-house, through the avenue mentioned, through the palace-gate, through a wat-ground, by a market-place, and through narrow streets to our teaching-hall. Here were assembled the king's young wives and the princesses of the blood. Curiosity and a desire to please the king brought them together, and lessons in English were made the order of the hour. The wives of the king selected for English study were pretty, bright young girls, worthy of a far better and happier fate than they could possibly find in the harem of any king. Some of the princesses were fine, noble-looking women, who comforted themselves in their lonely lives by reflecting that they were not obliged to share a husband's love with scores of others.

As was expected, these royal ladies dropped away from the English class, and ere long none were left excepting a few young wives of the king who were ambitious to please His Majesty and to be able to converse with him in English. As the ladies left the English class, they wished us to visit them in their homes; which we did, taking with us our Christian books in Siamese, which some of them were fond of reading. I remember a servant of one of the princesses who eagerly read our books, and would give us a full account of what she had read in one book before receiving another.

The little English class was continued, and books and maps were procured for its persevering members. They made commendable progress, though often interrupted by fêtes and festivals and play-days. One of them one day asked me with seriousness what could be done to make the king young. On the spur of the moment I replied, "Oh, have him advance in knowledge and goodness; that will keep him young." The answer, so unpremeditated, pleased the young wife. I think she whispered it in the ear of the king, to his great satisfaction and delight, for he had a very homely as well as old face.

The king was called Chon Chewitt ("lord of life"), and woe betide the one who would dare to cross his will! One day I was conversing with these young wives, when one of them whispered, "Hush! hush!" I inquired the reason, and she significantly pointed toward the king's quarters and drew her hand across her neck, as much as to say, "To converse on such a subject might displease His Majesty, and he could take off our heads." I was credibly informed that he ordered one of his wives to be put in chains and in prison for forgetting to wear a certain ring which he had ordered to be worn on a certain day. One of our pupils, a sweet-faced young girl, stole the king's spectacles, and sold them—to increase her spending-money, I suppose. I asked to be led to her quarters, thinking I might be of some service to her. I went, and upon arriving at the place, a sort of enclosed court with open rooms, I inquired for her, and her pleasant face peeped out from behind a screen, where she was confined, and returned my salutations. She seemed totally untroubled by her situation; its commonness made the disgrace unfelt, I suppose. Presently a female officer passed and turned a stern eye upon me, and I quietly left, seeing that I could be of no service there.

The king we seldom saw. There was to be a procession on the river one day, and His Majesty, with the ladies of the court, was to go to the river's edge to view it. The ladies invited me to accompany them, and I did so, and sat with them at some distance from the king. His Majesty recognized me among them, and called me to him. I approached him as I would approach the President of the United States. He received me with politeness and pleasant salutations, and handed me the glass with which he was viewing the procession. I received it from his hand, and with it watched for a while the pageant as it slowly moved over the river. I then returned the glass, bade His Majesty adieu and returned to my seat among the princesses. For their sakes I was glad of this little episode, for in those days Siamese etiquette required inferiors to prostrate themselves upon hands and knees, with faces to the earth, before superiors. In this position their salutation was to place their hands together, touch them to the forehead and bow to the floor or earth. In this painful attitude even the princes and nobles always appeared before His Majesty, and the custom prevailed throughout all the ranks. The elbows and knees of the king's courtiers were hard and callous, as they were obliged so often to be in attendance upon His Majesty.

One day I was visiting a very friendly princess, a daughter of the late king. She was delighted with our calls. On this occasion I found her lame and sore. It was at the time when the young queen was sick unto death. Under such circumstances the king deigns to be present in the sick chamber, and this princess was one among the number called to wait upon His Majesty. In carrying out his orders they were obliged to crawl upon their hands and knees, and her knees were all blistered by the day's waiting. I could not refrain from saying, "Why, we are not made like cats and dogs! We are made to walk upright." This remark pleased her, and after thinking a few moments she said, "How true! and how much easier and nicer to walk upright!" But, thinking a few moments more, she said, "But, ah, it cannot be done here." Sure enough, such is the power of custom that it could not be done then and there, but influences were at work which would gradually undo those hard, servile customs. When those princesses saw me walk upright in the presence of the king they would naturally think, "Why are we not permitted to do the same?" and thus one little step is taken to remove the shackles.

One day, as our attendant was leading me to our teaching-hall, we were near meeting a lady of high rank with her long train of servants. Now, I did not require my attendant to crouch before me, and she would naturally infer that with her I would prostrate myself in the presence of this lady of rank. So, touching my arm, she warned me of the approach of the royal personage, expecting me to meet her as an inferior and prostrate myself before her. "Oh," I said, "I am an American; our customs are different from yours." I had met this lady before, and she knew me and met me with a pleasant salutation, while my attendant and all the train of maidens were down to the earth in a moment. Now, the natural thought among these prostrate ones would be, "Here is a person who stands on a footing with our great ones, yet she does not require us to prostrate ourselves before her." Little by little are such miserable customs worn away by persistent Christian effort.

Our visits to the houses of the different ladies of the palace became more and more extended. These houses were not the clean, sweet, pleasant homes of an intelligent Christianity. Only a few of them had much that was attractive about them. In many of them flowers were cultivated, and they wrought in fancy-work. For their gala-days their servants would bring in large quantities of flowers, which they would turn into fanciful forms to grace the festive occasions.

One day I was seated with a princess upon an elevated platform in her court. She and her maidens were at work with artificial flowers, and a cup of paste and vessels with the parts of the flowers and leaves were scattered here and there among them. All at once a pet monkey which had become loose marched to the stage and suddenly appeared among us. Undaunted, he walked about, put his nose into the cup of paste and tipped it over, passed his paws over the delicate parts prepared for the complete flowers and made himself master of the situation. I sat in mute consternation, while the princess and her maidens seemed as quiet as if no monkey were there. By and by he marched around to a place where a servant could secure him, and she made him fast. I asked why they allowed him to march around their work and commit such depredations. "Ah," said one of them, "if we had attempted to take him then, he would have bitten us and would have made greater havoc among our flowers; better to wait till he works himself into a place where he can be secured without danger."

I have kept one of the sisters of the king very pleasantly in memory. Her bearing was noble and lady-like, and with a fair opportunity she would have graced the palace of any king. She read our Christian books, and seemed interested in them. One day we had a long conversation upon the Christian religion. She remarked that my religion was good and that her religion was good, and she spoke of the deeds of merit she had done. "Yes," I replied, "wherein they agree they are both alike good, but in some things they do not at all agree. In the Christian religion we believe in one God, the great Jehovah, who created all things and who is from everlasting to everlasting. In the Buddhist religion you have made a human philosopher a god. The great Jehovah has forbidden the worship of idols, but your country is full of them, and the name of the true God is taken in vain. The great Jehovah has commanded us to set apart one day in seven for his worship, but in your religion this is not observed. We believe in the great eternal One described in our Bible, who made these beautiful flowers and made our wonderful bodies with their spirit-life—who created the heavens above us and the earth beneath us and all things. This great eternal One has given his Son to be a Redeemer to all who will come to him and repent of sin. These things make the Christian religion different from yours." The dear lady thoughtfully replied, "These things I must look into; I have not thought of them before." I sincerely hope she did look into them, and was brought to reverence and adore the great Jehovah through the merits of Jesus Christ.

We did not rudely intrude the tenets of our religion upon them, but always answered kind inquiries and freely gave our opinions. In this way they would frequently be led to acknowledge the superiority of our customs over theirs. In the matter of polygamy many high in station in their quiet moments, in private conversation, would acknowledge it to be a very bad thing, and the king seemed happy in saying that he had fewer wives than any of his predecessors. When Christianity reigns in full power this giant evil will be for ever banished from our world. By persistent Christian effort, with law on its side, may we not hope that it will be speedily driven from our own dear country for ever?

After three years, during which time our visits to the palace were kept up quite regularly, they came to a close. One day Mrs. Smith started for her day at the palace. Our attendant was not at the river-house to meet her; but at other times she had not been there, and we found our own way in the palace-grounds; so Mrs. Smith proceeded to the palace-gate. But the gatekeeper was not to be seen, nor any of her company, and Mrs. Smith left. We all felt that this probably meant that our teaching in the palace must cease. But as it seemed possible that the gate-women might be away attending some festival for the time, I went the next day, to make sure. There was no attendant at the river-house, and as I passed up the avenue for the palace-gate a Siamese woman stepped into the avenue from a side gate just before me. The moment she saw me she darted back, plainly showing that an order had been given, and that it was understood. I proceeded to the gate where we had so often passed in and out. As I drew near there was a rustle and a rush to hide from my presence. I called out pleasantly in Siamese, asking if they would not open the gate for me, but no answer came excepting the suppressed laughter of some young girls hiding behind the screens. We quietly accepted the evident intention of the king, and our teaching in the palace ceased.

It was thought that some of the ladies were becoming interested in Christianity, but of this we could not be sure. Some years after this time His Majesty advertised for an English teacher for his children, with the strict proviso that the Christian religion should have no place in the teaching. To break from settled customs might cost him his throne. Worldly policy! How many with high Christian intelligence it has kept from the right and true! Need we wonder at this heathen king? With great infirmities he had some noble traits. He owed more to the Christian religion than he would be willing to allow. When Mr. Mattoon was about leaving Siam he went to the palace to bid the king adieu. In the interview His Majesty acknowledged his belief in the true God—the "Supreme Agency," as he termed it. He has passed away since then, and his son is now on the throne. Many happy changes have been wrought out, and we constantly pray that the great and best change may come—that every idol may be cast away and loyalty to the great Jehovah may be written upon every heart in Siam.

TEACHING IN THE PALACE OF THE KING OF SIAM IN 1880.

The following letter from Maa Tuan, matron of the girls' boarding-school at Bangkok, was partially translated from the Siamese and partially dictated to one of the missionary ladies. She is a most efficient, earnest Christian worker, a "living witness" among these people. She has been a Christian for years, her father being literally the "first-fruits" of Presbyterian effort in Siam.

MAA TUAN'S LETTER.

A nobleman, the brother of Koon Lin, a former pupil in the school, who is now, with her sister Juan, in the royal palace—the latter being a wife of His Majesty the king—asked me to come to the palace and teach his sisters during the two months of vacation.

I lived in the royal harem for one month, and I think it will interest your friends to have me tell you some of the things I saw while there. It is said that within the palace-walls there are about one thousand women, wives, slaves and servants, as no man is permitted to live there except His Majesty the king. I should judge that about thirty of these women are wives of the king. Many of these wives, with their servants, live in a long brick building which stands near the palace. Eight of the king's half-sisters and the only daughter of the regent of the Belur are the highest in position, and their rooms in the harem are more richly and beautifully furnished than those of the other wives. The rooms of the king's favorite, Peahong Sawang (one of his half-sisters), are three in number. The first is trimmed with pink silk, another blue and the third green. Even the windows and door are colored, and all is very beautiful to the eye.

Peahong Sawang is the mother of the oldest son of His Majesty, who is now about two years of age. To be the mother of a royal son is quite an honor in the harem, and it is only male offspring of the king, *by one of his sisters,* that can inherit the throne.

I lived in the harem with the women, and saw and talked with them all very often. They were quite friendly, though they knew that I had given up their religion, and would not bow to the image of Buddha, which they worshiped every night, offering flowers and burning of fragrant wood. These women sit in idleness all the day long, unless sent for to go to the palace. They often tried to persuade me to return to Buddhism, giving me one of their books to read instead of my Bible, which I had with me, and making sport of me, saying, 'Ah, you were once in the light, but now you are walking in the darkness.' But my heart did not mind what they said; I told them of the religion of Jesus, and, going by myself, I prayed to Jesus to help them. My business there was to teach Koon Lin and Koon Juan to translate Siamese into English. Both these girls were pupils of Mrs. Dr. House, and speak very lovingly of her. Koon Lin still has the English Bible Mrs. House gave her, and translated from it every day. She said that when she was in school she believed its teachings, but now she was indifferent, it was all so different in the palace.

The police who have charge of the royal harem are women, and night and day close watch is kept that no one goes out or comes in without their permission. Any one not known to the guards is searched at the door of entrance. Every afternoon at four o'clock the gates of the palace are locked. On my way to the market near I could often see the king as he walked in his royal palace, which is higher than other buildings. In the courtyard below the native children played noisily, which the king did not seem to mind. This is very different from the old king, before whom all must bow or fall on their faces.

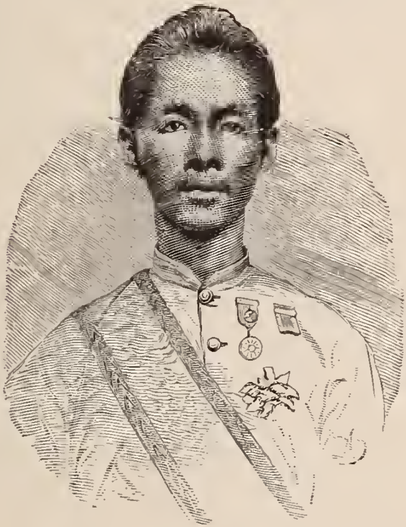
CHAPTER XX.

CORONATION OF HIS MAJESTY THE SUPREME KING OF SIAM.

THE Siamese monarchy is not hereditary—that is, not in the sense that that term is understood in Europe. There is what is called the *Senabodee*, or royal counselors, consisting of the chief ministers of state, who during the life of the king are merely silent counselors, but upon his death their power becomes manifest, and upon them devolves the responsibility of selecting a successor and governing the kingdom until such successor is chosen. The successor must be a prince of the realm, but not necessarily the eldest son of the late king; indeed, not necessarily a son of his at all.

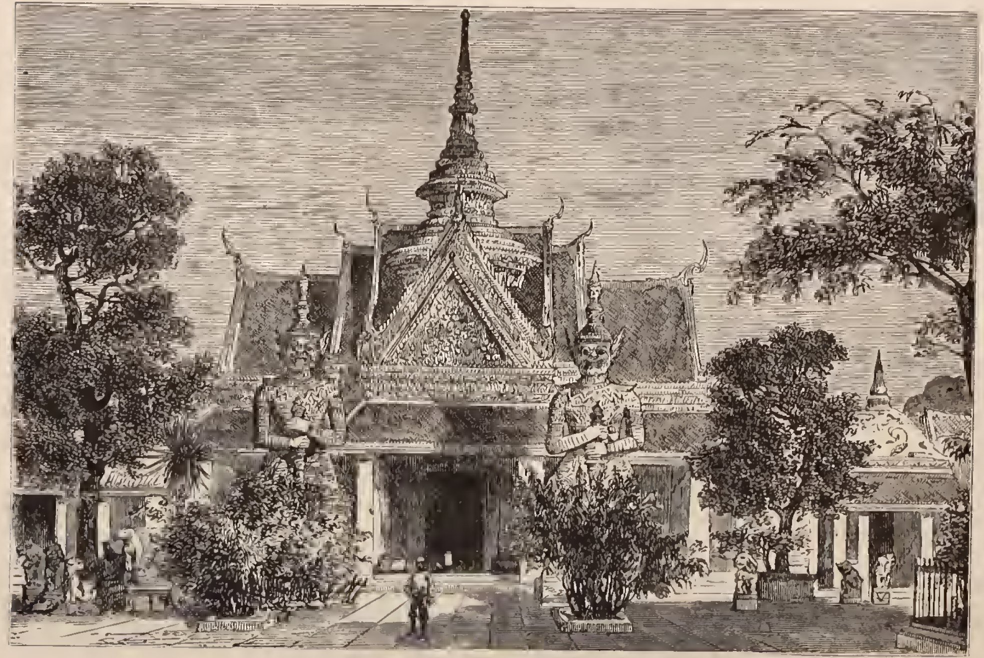
The death of the late king occurred about nine o'clock P. M. The prime minister was immediately summoned to the palace, and convened the *Senabodee*, and before midnight the succession was determined and everything going on smoothly. They chose in this instance the eldest son of the late king, Somdetch Chowfa Chulalangkorn, a boy about sixteen years old.

His coronation took place on Wednesday, November 11, 1868, being the day decided upon by the Brahman astrologers as the one most propitious. At this coronation there was a slight innovation upon the usual Siamese custom. No European had ever before witnessed the coronation ceremonies of any king of Siam. The late king, after his coronation, wrote a private note to some of his European friends stating that he would have been glad to have had them present, but "state reasons forbade the presence of foreigners."



SOMDETCH CHOWFA CHULALANGKORN.

The number of Europeans present at the coronation proper of the present king were few, consisting of the consuls of the different treaty powers with their suites, the officers of H. B. M.'s gunboat Avon and a few others. The writer held at the time the seals of the United States consulate, and was the only representative of our government in the kingdom, and consequently received an invitation, which might not have been accorded to him as a mere missionary. The company of Siamese present was equally small, consisting only of the chief princes and nobles of the kingdom. The hour named was six A. M., but owing to some delay it was nearly eight when we passed into a small triangular court facing one of the doors of the inner audience-hall. In front of the door of the hall stood an elevated platform richly gilded, and upon that platform was placed a very large golden basin. Within that basin was a golden tripod or three-legged stool. Over the platform was a quadrangular canopy, and over the canopy was the nine-storied umbrella, tapering in the form of a pagoda. Over the centre of the canopy was a vessel containing consecrated water, said to have been prayed over nine times and poured through nine different circular vessels before reaching the top of the canopy. This water is collected from the chief rivers of Siam and at a point above tidal influence, and is constantly kept on hand in reservoirs near the temples in the capital. In the vessel was placed a tube or



HALL OF AUDIENCE, PALACE OF BANGKOK.

siphon, representing the pericarp of the lotus-flower after the petals have fallen off.

At a flourish of crooked trumpets resembling rams' horns the king elect descended from the steps of the hall, arrayed in a simple waist-cloth of white muslin, with a piece of the same material thrown over his shoulders, and took his seat upon the tripod in the basin. A Brahman priest approached him and offered him some water in a golden lotus-shaped cup, into which he dipped his hand and rubbed it over his head. This was the signal for the pulling of a rope and letting loose the sacred water above in the form of a shower-bath upon his person. This shower-bath represents the *Tewadas*, or Buddhist angels, sending blessings upon His Majesty. A Buddhist priest then approached and poured a goblet of water over his person. Next came the Brahman priests and did the same. Next came the chief princes, uncles of the king; next two aged princesses, his aunts. The vessels used by these princes and princesses were conch-shells tipped with gold. Then came the chief nobles, each with a vessel of different material, such as gold, silver, pinchbeck, earthenware; then, last of all, the prime minister with a vessel of iron. This finished the royal bath.

He then descended from the stool in a shivering state, and was divested of his wet clothes and arrayed in regal robes of golden cloth studded with diamonds. In the south end of the audience-hall was an octagonal throne, having sides corresponding to the eight points of the compass. He first seated himself on the side facing north, passing around toward the east. In front of each side of the throne was crouched a Buddhist and a Brahman priest, who presented him with a bowl of water, of which he drank and rubbed some on his face. At each side they repeated to him a prayer, to which he responded. I was too far off to hear all, but the following is said to be a translation of it:

Priest. "Be thou learned in the laws of nature and of the universe."

King. "Inspire me, O Thou who wert a law unto thyself!"

Priest. "Be thou endowed with all wisdom and all acts of industry."

King. "Inspire me with all knowledge, O Thou the enlightened!"

Priest. "Let mercy and truth be thy right and left arms of life."

King. "Inspire me, O Thou who hast proved all truth and mercy!"

Priest. "Let the sun, moon and stars bless thee."

King. "All praise to Thee, through whom all forms are conquered!"

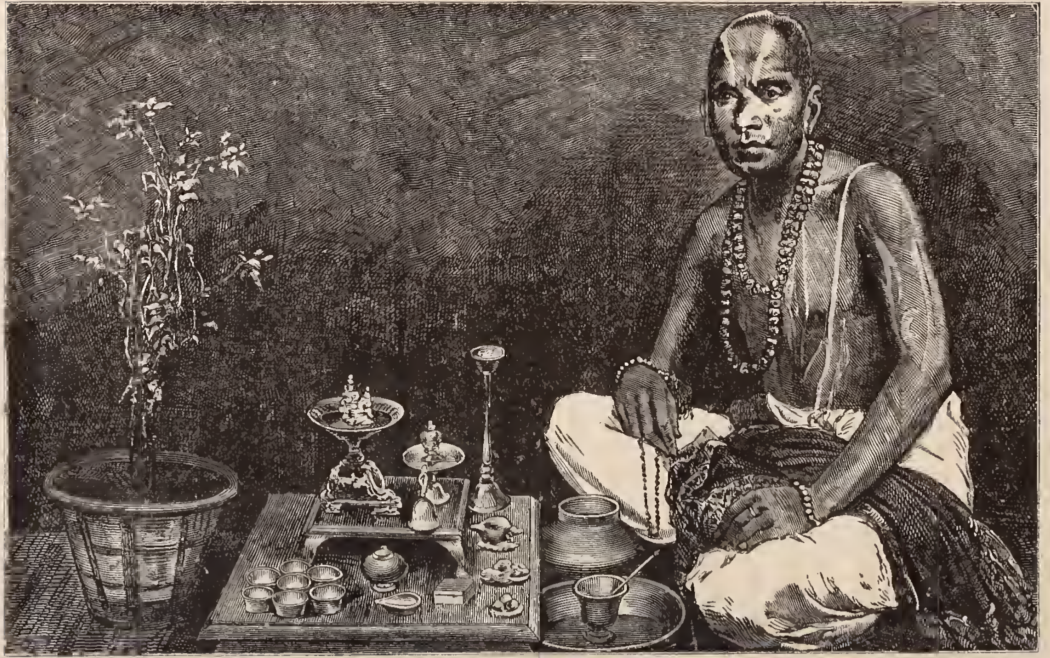
Priest. "Let the earth, air and water bless thee."

King. "Through the merit of thee, O Thou conqueror of death!"

He was then conducted to the north end of the hall, and was seated upon another throne. The insignia of royalty were then presented to him. They were handed to him by his uncle, Prince Chowfa Malaa Mala. First came the sword, then the sceptre, then two massive gold chains in a casket, which he suspended around his shoulders. Then came the crown, which he put on his own head, and at that instant the royal salute proclaimed him king under the title of Prabat Somdetch Pra Paramendr Maha Chulalang Korn Kate Klou Yu Hua. Then came the golden slippers, the fan, the umbrella, two large massive rings set with huge diamonds, which he placed on each of his forefingers. Then one of each of the Siamese weapons of war were handed to him, which he received and handed back.

The Brahmans then wound up with a short address, to which he briefly responded. He then distributed a few gold and silver flowers among his friends, and the Europeans then withdrew to breakfast, which had been prepared for them.

It may be asked why the Brahmans officiate so much when Siam is emphatically a Buddhist country. I have asked several well-informed noblemen for the reason, but have as yet been unable to ascertain. No one appears able to give any true reason. There are a number of



BRAHMAN AT WORSHIP.

Brahmans in the country, but their existence is scarcely ever noticed except on some such occasion as the above.

At eleven o'clock A. M. the new king appeared for the first time before his whole court. The outer audience-hall was richly decorated and spread with rich Brussels carpet. When the foreign consuls entered in a body the whole Siamese court was prostrate on their knees and elbows on the carpet. Very soon the king entered, arrayed in regal robes and wearing his crown, and seated himself upon the throne. The whole court simultaneously placed the palms of their hands together and then raised them up to the forehead, bowing their heads three times to the floor. The chief ministers of state then formally delivered over their several departments to the new monarch, to whom he briefly responded. Senhor Vianna, consul-general for Portugal—his being the oldest consulate—then, on behalf of the consuls present, read a short congratulatory address, which called forth another brief response, and the audience retired.

The king has generally one whom he constitutes his queen-consort. A young princess of the highest rank that can be found in the kingdom is selected. She is not, however, certain of promotion until after she has lived with the king for a time and has succeeded in gaining a large place in the royal affections. When this is sufficiently accomplished the king appoints a day for her exaltation. Three days are usually devoted to the purpose; the chief officers of the palace and the chief princes and nobles of the kingdom are present.

The principal ceremonies devolve upon the priests, of whom there are quite a number present, both Buddhist and Brahman. The princess is copiously bathed in pure water, in which the leaves of a certain kind of tree supposed to possess purifying and healthful influences are put. Most of the time is spent in feasting, but on the third day she is placed on a small throne under a white canopy, where she is bathed with holy water, the priests reciting prayers the while. She is then conducted to a place where her wet clothes are laid aside, and she is arrayed in queenly costume, jewels and diamonds, and then displays herself to those in attendance.

Instances have occurred where the king had two queen-consorts. In such cases the one is called "the queen of the right hand" and the other "the queen of the left hand." It has only happened about twice in Siamese history that the king has taken a foreign princess for his queen-consort.

THE SIAMESE OATH OF ALLEGIANCE.

On the 21st of March, 1882, all the Siamese officials in the province met upon the top of the mountain nearest to the town of Petchaburee and drank the water of allegiance, pledging their loyalty to their sovereign. They met in the audience-hall belonging to the king's country palace, which crowns the summit of this picturesque eminence. Upon the throne erected for the king an image of Lord Buddha was temporarily placed. Before the idol were burned incense-sticks and sacred candles made of yellow wax. Below the idol was a large brasen basin containing the water of allegiance. Across this basin were placed a sword, gun, spear and other warlike weapons; a cord was tied to the idol, and, passing around the basin of water, passed through the hands of a line of yellow-robed priests, whose vain repetitions in the Pali language were supposed to pass along the string to their gilded god. Before each priest was placed two large salvers containing a great variety of tempting-looking eatables, upon which, as soon as they had finished their prayers, they fell to work in good earnest. The repast finished, they brushed their teeth with the ends of soft sticks, lit their cigarettes and puffed away complacently while the oath was being administered.

The oath of allegiance is a long, horrible affair, which should they fail to keep, they said, "We beseech the power of the deities to plague with poisonous boils rapidly fatal and all manner of diseases the dishonorable, perverse and treacherous with untimely, wretched and appalling deaths, manifest to the eyes of the world; when we shall have departed this life from earth cause us to be sent and all to be born in the great hell, where we shall burn with quenchless fire for tens and hundreds of thousands of ages and limitless transmigrations; and when we have expiated our penalty there, and are again born into any world, we pray we may fail to find the least happiness in worlds of pleasurable enjoyments; let us not meet the god Buddha, the sacred teachings, the sacred priests that come to be gracious to animals, helping them escape misery, reach heaven and attain a succession of births and deaths; should we meet them, let them grant us no gracious assistance." This is not all, but it is enough to show the fearfulness of the oath, to which the officials listened with apparent indifference.

The governor of the province, sitting upon his mat, with his vessels and ornaments of gold spread out before him, seemed the most indifferent of them all, and spent the greater portion of the time occupied by reading the oath in picking fleas from his favorite dog and in cracking them over his thumb. After the reading of the oath the various weapons were dipped into the water, which exercise was accompanied by the chanting of the priests and the blowing of conch-shells, after which all in authority drank of the water and sprinkled it upon their heads, bowing toward the idol and toward Bangkok, where the king resides. This ended the ceremony, and all departed to their homes.

CHAPTER XXI.

HISTORY OF THE MISSIONS IN SIAM AND LAOS.

THE American trading-vessel, commanded by Captain Coffin, which in 1829 brought to this country the famous "Siamese Twins," brought also an earnest appeal for aid in evangelizing that then almost unknown land of their birth.

The appeal came from the zealous German missionary Gutzlaff and his associate, the Rev. Mr. Tomlin, of the London Missionary Society, who six months before had made their way to Siam, where they found not only an open door, but a large and most inviting field, for missionary labor. Their own societies not encouraging their permanent occupation of this advanced post in heathendom, both these brethren urged the American churches to enter in and possess the land for Christ. In response to the appeal of Gutzlaff, which was specially addressed to them, the American Board of Foreign Missions instructed the Rev. David Abeel, then in China, to visit Siam with a view to its occupancy if he deemed it advisable.

Dr. Abeel reached Singapore just as Mr. Tomlin was on the eve of embarking on a second visit to Bangkok, and arrived with him in Siam on June 30, 1831, a few days after Mr. Gutzlaff, disheartened by the death of his devoted wife, had sailed away in a native junk for Tientsin on the first of his memorable voyages of missionary exploration up the coast of China. He had been in Siam nearly three years in all, and had baptized one Chinese convert, whose name was Boontai.

The new-comers found the people eager for the books and medicines they had brought, and they labored faithfully for the good of the many Siamese and Chinese of high and low degree who came to visit them. In six months, however, Mr. Tomlin was called away, and Dr. Abeel also was obliged to leave Siam on a trip to Singapore to recruit his impaired health. Returning to Siam, he labored on till November 5, 1832, when continued ill-health drove him finally from the field.

Just two months before this the Rev. John Taylor Jones, who had been appointed a missionary to Siam by his American Baptist missionary associates in Burmah, to whom also Messrs. Gutzlaff and Tomlin had written, left Maulmain, where he had been stationed, for Singapore, on his way with his family to his new field. Delayed at that port, he did not arrive in Siam till March 25, 1833. Mr. Jones had been designated specially to the Siamese, but took supervision at once of the little company of Chinese worshipers Dr. Abeel and others had gathered, and in December baptized three of them. His Board at home approved the step Mr. Jones had taken, and determined to sustain the new mission, which thus proved to be the first permanently established in Siam.

The next to arrive in the field were two missionaries of the American Board, Messrs. Johnson and Robinson, who, with their wives, had embarked at Boston June 11, 1833, but, detained nine weary months in Singapore for a vessel to Siam, did not reach Bangkok till July 25, 1834, having been more than a year on their way. Mr. Johnson entered at once upon active labors for the Chinese, and Mr. Robinson for the Siamese, part of the population.

During the summer of 1834 the Rev. William Dean and his wife, who had been appointed by the American Baptist Board missionaries to the Chinese of Siam—their first missionaries, in fact, to any speaking the Chinese language—and Daniel B. Bradley, M. D., and wife, whom the American Board sent out to reinforce their mission to the Siamese, sailed from Boston for Singapore. While delayed at Singapore, Mrs. Dean was removed by death, and it was not till July 18, twelve months after leaving Boston, that Drs. Dean and Bradley, with Mrs. Bradley, reached their destined field.

Dr. Bradley soon opened a medical dispensary, and entered with zeal, faith and energy, which neither illness nor tropical heat nor any discouragement could abate, upon a course of medical and preaching, printing, writing and translating labors for the good of the Siamese, which ceased not till he resigned his breath in June, 1873—thirty-eight years after. Dr. Dean devoted himself to the instruction of the Chinese that thronged the city—a labor of Christian love which this venerable first apostle of the Baptist Church to the Chinese is still (1884) prosecuting in that same heathen city. In December, 1835, he baptized three new converts.

Both missions were now in efficient working order, with each its Chinese department as well as its Siamese, the Baptist mission laboring among the Chinese that spoke the Tachew dialect, who were emigrants from the Swatow district of the Canton province, while the A. B. C. F. M.'s mission looked after those that spoke the Hokien or Amoy dialect—different from that used by the Swatow people, and hardly intelligible to them.

The medical services of the missionaries and their medicines, and the Christian tracts and books they distributed without money and without price, were eagerly sought, and there was free access to the people in their streets, homes, and temples even, for making known the new religion; but none seemed savingly impressed—none of the *Siamese.* Indeed, while the protracted reign of the bigoted and imperious king who was on the throne when missions were established in Siam continued, it would seem no native could be brought even to entertain the question of forsaking the religion of the land, such was the dread of the king's wrath and of the stripes, imprisonment, torture, death itself perhaps, that might be the fate of a convert.

The Chinese settlers in Siam were allowed more freedom of conscience; the displeasure of their kinsmen was all they would have to fear from change of religion. So Dr. Dean had the happiness of seeing the number of Chinese believers increase, till in 1837 a church was organized—the first church of Protestant Chinese Christians that was ever gathered in the East. To this, by 1848, sixty names had been added at different times. Mr. Johnson too, of the American Board's mission, had the pleasure of baptizing his Chinese teacher in 1838, and in 1844 another of his teachers, Quaking, a Chinese of very respectable literary attainments.

Meanwhile, all labored on in hope. Reinforcements were sent from time to time to each mission. To the Baptist came, July, 1836, the Rev. Mr. Davenport and wife and Mr. and Mrs.

Reid—Mr. Reid, alas! to die of dysentery in a little over a year. With these brethren came a printing-press. A printing-press was sent out to the American mission also the next year, so that both were now fully equipped for a most important branch of mission-work among this nation of readers. Before the year (1836) came to a close the first tract was printed, containing an account of the giving of the Law, a summary of the Ten Commandments, a short prayer and a few hymns. This is supposed to be the first printing ever executed in Siam. They had also secured more comfortable quarters on the west bank of the river, in the heart of the city, in houses built for them and leased to them by the Praklang, the minister of foreign affairs.

In March, 1838, Mrs. Eliza G. Jones died of cholera. She was a lady of many gifts and graces. A little tract from her pen, *The Burmese Village*, is one of the most vivid and touching pictures of heathenism in all missionary literature. In April the Rev. Mr. Robbins and Dr. Tracy arrived to join the A. B. C. F. M. mission, but both left the following year.

This year (1838) was one memorable in the history of the Presbyterian mission, as in it occurred the visit of the Rev. R. W. Dee, who had been directed by the Presbyterian Board to proceed to Bangkok and report upon its eligibility as a station for the missionary operations they were about entering upon for the Chinese, so difficult of access in their own country. During his month's stay in Siam, Mr. Dee found so large a field unoccupied, where laborers from our branch of the Church would be gladly welcomed, that he urged upon the Board the establishment of a mission in that land, not only to the Chinese there, but to the Siamese also. November 5, 1838, Dr. Bradley was ordained a minister of the gospel by his congregational associates.

In 1839 the Siamese government availed itself of one of the mission printing-presses to multiply copies of a royal proclamation against opium, and had an edition of nine thousand copies struck off. In August of this year the Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Slaftee of the Baptist mission arrived.

In 1840 vaccination was successfully introduced into Siam by Dr. Bradley,—a great boon to the people, among whom small-pox often committed fearful ravages.

The American Board's mission was strongly reinforced in its Siamese departments early in the year by the arrival of the Rev. Messrs. Jesse Caswell, Asa Hemenway, N. S. Benham and their wives, with Miss Pierce—Mr. Benham to lose his life in one short month by drowning, his boat capsizing in the Menam when returning from an evening prayer-meeting. The Rev. Messrs. French and Peet, with their wives, also arrived in May. To the Chinese department of the Baptist mission came the Rev. Josiah Goddard and his wife in October.

It was in August of this same year that the Rev. William Buell and wife, the first missionaries of the Presbyterian Board to the Siamese, arrived in Bangkok. There were then in Siam no less than twenty-four adult male and female missionaries.

But the next year Mr. Slaftee died of dysentery and Mrs. Johnson of brain fever, and the widowed Mrs. Benham returned to the United States. In 1842, Mr. French died of consumption, and the following year his widow left Siam for the United States.

In 1842, by the treaty made at the close of the war between England and China, the island of Hong Kong was ceded to the English and five important seaports thrown open to foreign residence and trade. Dr. Dean, under instruction from his Board, who hastened to enter the now unbarred gates of access to the Chinese empire, removed early in the year to Hong Kong, leaving the Chinese church in Bangkok in charge of Mr. Goddard.

In 1843, Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Chandler arrived from Burmah, where, as a type-founder and lay missionary, he had been employed for three years. Being a practical machinist, he did much to introduce a knowledge of the useful arts among some of the leading men of the kingdom. Prince Chow Fah Noi, who subsequently, in 1851, was made the second king, became a pupil of his, and constructed a well-appointed machine-shop under his supervision, as did also an intelligent young Siamese nobleman of progressive ideas who afterward became master of the mint.

In 1844 the first steamer ever seen in Siam made its appearance, and greatly astonished the natives. On leaving, it took as passengers to Singapore the Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Buell, the only missionaries of the Presbyterian Board, who were now, after only three and a half years' residence, most reluctantly obliged to abandon their work, Mrs. Buell having been stricken with paralysis. With their departure (February 24th) the Presbyterian mission in Siam died out, or rather was suspended, and more than three years elapsed before it was resumed. It had from the first been the intention of the Board to establish and maintain a *Chinese* department, but those sent out for this purpose, on reaching Singapore and learning there how fully open China proper was to the gospel, felt themselves called to proceed to that land, whose claims seemed so much greater. Miss Pierce of the American Board, who had come out as a missionary teacher, but failed to gather a school, died of consumption in September of this year.

The year 1845 witnessed quite a reduction in the number of the American missionaries in Siam. The Rev. Mr. Davenport and wife (now Mrs. Fanny Feudge) of the Baptist mission left for the United States, to return no more, and Dr. Jones, also, on a visit. The Rev. Charles Robinson and family of the A. B. C. F. M. also left Siam (Mr. R. to die at St. Helena on his passage home), while Mrs. Dr. Bradley died at Bangkok in the triumphs of faith after years of efficient and loving service for her Saviour—a most valuable helper in her husband's work.

It was in this year that Prince Chow Fah Mongkut (Chow Fa Yai), who afterward became king, then head-priest of a royal monastery within the city-walls, invited one of the American missionaries, the Rev. Jesse Caswell, to become his private tutor. So anxious was this priest-prince for instruction that he offered an inducement which he knew would weigh heavily with a missionary—the use of a room in a building on the temple-grounds, where, after his hour for teaching was over, he could preach and distribute Christian tracts. The arrangement was made and carried out for over a year and a half. So much of the future of Siam in providence was to hinge on those hours of intimate intercourse between the faithful teacher and his illustrious and most diligent pupil that all the particulars are of interest. The prince was then about forty years of age—his teacher a graduate of Lane Theological Seminary, a member of the Presbytery of Cincinnati, and in the service of the A. B. C. F. M.

In 1846 the American Board, rightly deeming China proper a wider and more promising field for the labors of their Chinese-speaking missionaries, decided to give up their Chinese department in Siam, instructing Messrs. Johnson and Peet to proceed to China and establish a new mission at Fuh-Chow-fuh. With the close of the year came the Rev. Mr. Jenks to assist Mr. Goddard of the Baptist mission, only to leave, however, before the close of the next year, in consequence of the failure of Mrs. Jenks's health.

In February, 1847, Dr. Bradley, with his three motherless children, left on a visit to the United States, his ship passing in the Gulf of Siam the vessel in which newly-appointed missionaries of the Presbyterian Board, Rev. Stephen Mattoon and wife and Samuel R. House, M. D., were on their way to recommence the mission-work of that Board in Siam, which had been so long discontinued.

These brethren had sailed from New York for China in the ship Grafton in July, 1846, arriving at Macao, after a five months' voyage, on Christmas Day. No opportunity thence direct to Siam presenting, they were constrained to proceed *viâ* Singapore. There they were most hospitably entertained by the Rev. B. P. Keasberry, a missionary to the Malays, then of the London Missionary Society. Finding in the harbor a native-built trading-ship belonging to the king of Siam, commanded by a European, they secured a passage in it to Bangkok, which, after a tedious voyage of twenty-four days, they reached March 22, 1847, eight months after they left New York. The journey from New York to Bangkok can now be made by transcontinental railways and Pacific mail-steamers, or by English steamers and the Suez Canal, according as one goes west or east, in six or seven weeks only.

Upon arriving the new-comers were most cordially received by the brethren of the A. B. C. F. M. and the American Baptist mission, and welcomed to the homes of Messrs. Caswell and Hemenway, the only remaining members of the A. B. C. F. M., till the vacant houses on their premises could be prepared for their reception. They were soon visited by many of the nobles and princes, and took an early opportunity to pay their respects to the Praklang, Prince T. Mourfanoi (Chow Fah Noi), and his elder brother, T. Y. Chow Fah Mongkut, the prince-priest, at his residence in a beautiful monastery in the city. By both these princes they were most kindly received—by the last-named with marked regard, which they ever retained.

The tidings spreading that a new foreign physician had come to Siam, patients of every description and of all classes crowded for relief, till Dr. House was compelled to reopen the dispensary, which had long been sustained by Dr. Bradley in a floating-house moored in front of the mission premises. During the first eighteen months he had prescribed for three thousand one hundred and seventeen patients. Mr. Mattoon applied himself successfully to the study of the language, and soon entered upon the work of tract-distribution, visiting for this purpose the wats or Buddhist monasteries of the city, none being more ready to receive Christian books than the priests—or monks, rather—themselves.

In the ensuing cool season many tours were made with the brethren of other missions. Petchaburee, Ayuthia, Prabat and Petrui were visited, and everywhere they found a ready reception for the books and tracts they carried with them.

In 1848 the Rev. John Taylor Jones, D. D., returned with Mrs. S. S. Jones and Miss Harriet Morse, a missionary teacher, but Mr. Goddard of the same mission was obliged to remove to a more invigorating climate, and left for Ningpo, China. In September of this year the mission cause sustained an irreparable loss in the death of Jesse Caswell. He was a man of most earnest purpose and rare fitness for the missionary work.

His qualifications as a teacher were appreciated by the Prince Chow Fah Mongkut, who chose him as his instructor in the English language and science, and derived from him, chiefly during the eighteen months' continuous instruction he received, those enlarged and liberal ideas in government and religion which, when he succeeded to the throne, led him to open Siam to commerce and improvement. No wonder that after he became king he erected a handsome tomb over his esteemed teacher's remains and sent to his widow in the United States a gift of one thousand dollars, and subsequently five hundred dollars more, as tokens of regard for his memory. In February, 1849, Mrs. Caswell and family returned to America.

Mr. Caswell's death and Mr. Hemenway's illness threw now upon Mr. Mattoon, though he had been but eighteen months in the field, the Sabbath preaching-service at the station and a tri-weekly service at a hired room used as a chapel in the bazaar. There were, too, many applicants for books daily at the houses of the missionaries, and they had to be instructed and supplied.

In 1849 the Presbyterian missionaries were made glad by the arrival in April of the Rev. Stephen Bush and wife, as were the Baptists by the Rev. Samuel J. Smith's arrival in June. When a lad Mr. Smith had been taken into the family of Dr. Jones, came on with him to Siam, had been sent by him thence to the United States to be educated, and now came out to assist that veteran missionary in his work.

The newly-arrived missionaries were busy in the acquisition of the language when suddenly the pestilence like a thunderbolt burst upon the inhabitants of Bangkok, sweeping to destruction in less than one month full thirty-five thousand, or about one-tenth, of its population. For days together, when this epidemic of Asiatic cholera was at its height, there were two thousand deaths in the twenty-four hours in Bangkok alone. The mission families were graciously permitted to abide in peace and safety. As may be imagined, the whole time of the missionary-physician was engrossed by attendance on the sick and the dying in princes' palaces and in bamboo huts, and, through the blessing of Providence on remedies to which he was directed, many lives were saved and many lifelong friends secured to himself and the religion he professed. Of all those thousands that perished, alas! but one died in hope—an old man from a far-distant up-country home, who from the reading of Christian tracts alone, without ever seeing the living teacher, had joyfully received the truth, and, finding his way to Bangkok and to the Baptist mission to be instructed more perfectly, got there just in time (so it was strangely ordered) to become one of the earliest victims of the epidemic. He died without fear, trusting in the Saviour he had found.

August 29, 1849, witnessed the organization of the first Presbyterian church in Siam. Earnest prayer went up that day that the little vine there planted might flourish and increase, and at last overshadow the land. To this church, made up of the mission families, a worthy native brother was added by certificate from the church in connection with mission of the A. B. C. F. M. —Quakieng, who, it will be remembered, had been baptized by Mr. Johnson in 1844.

With the last week of the year 1849 the Rev. Asa Hemenway, the sole remaining missionary of the A. B. C. F. M., after just ten years of faithful service on mission-ground, embarked with his family for the United States, and the operations of that Board in Siam closed. For fifteen years its missionaries had cultivated this interesting and inviting, but as to visible results most barren, field. From none of the native races of the land had they gathered one reliable convert. Their missionaries had labored, and labored well, but others were to enter into their labor. The "set time" for Siam's visitation had not yet come. It would seem that "he that letteth must let, till he be taken out of the way" of this man-fearing people before gospel truth could have "free course, run and be glorified." The books that they prepared, translated and distributed, the favor won by their gratuitous healing of the sick, and the introduction, first, of inoculation and afterward of vaccination for the small-pox, the training given in habits of industry and order and in knowledge of the Christian Scriptures to those employed by them in their printing-office and in their families, were not lost, nor the high opinion the natives learned to entertain of the truthfulness, benevolence and goodness of American Christian men derived from them and their worthy Baptist associates. And we must not forget how largely the career of progress on which Siam has since entered is traceable to the influence of one member of this mission.

In the spring of 1850 the Rev. Dr. Bradley, who had, while in the United States, transferred his relations to the American Missionary Association, returned with Mrs. Sarah B. Bradley and his children, and with him came as associates the Rev. L. B. Lane, M. D., and Prof. J. Silsby. To the A. M. A. had been made over the dwelling-houses, chapel, printing-press, etc. of the A. B. C. F. M.; the ground on which they stood had been only leased.

It was now imperatively necessary that the Presbyterian mission should have a home of its own, but all attempts to procure one failed. The knowledge of the unwillingness of the government to give foreigners any foothold upon the soil deterred the owners of suitable locations from selling to the missionaries. And when at last one, braver than the rest, was found willing to part with land enough for a station in the upper part of the city, and permission to purchase obtained from the proper official, and the money had been paid over, and one of the missionaries with his family had removed in a floating house to the spot to commence building, a peremptory order from one of the highest grandees revoked the permission given, and compelled the return of the mission family and the payment back of the purchase-money by the seller. No other reason was given than that "the residence of foreigners there was contrary to the custom of the country." Nor could any eligible site be rented even.

The king, who had always been a zealous and bigoted Buddhist, had now become more despotic and selfish and averse to foreign intercourse than ever, monopolized himself what little trade there was, and settled down into a narrow policy that would exclude all nations but China from the products of his dominion. Neither of the friendly embassies which visited Siam this year—that from America in March or that from England in August — could obtain an audience even, much less gain any concessions in matters of trade or residence or protection of the interests of their people.

The English ambassador, the celebrated Sir James Brooke ("Rajah Brooke"), mortified and insulted by the reception given him, withdrew, threatening to return with a fleet and force that should compel respect. War seemed so imminent that the proposition kindly made to the mission families to retire with the ships of the embassy, lest hostile measures entered upon should subject not English residents only, but all speaking the English tongue, to a fate like that of Dr. Judson when the war broke out with Burmah, was seriously considered, though not accepted.

Very dark were the prospects of all the missions now. The native teachers were arrested and imprisoned, and threatened with the ratan and with fetters; the Siamese servants left in a panic; none came to hear preaching or applied for books.

But the darkest hour is just before day. Just then, in the overruling providence of God, a mortal though lingering illness seized the king, and for months all things were in suspense till, in April, 1851, his long reign ended and he "entered into Nipan," as the Siamese say when royalty expires.

Upon the throne, as his successor, was now placed, by the concurrent voice of the grand council of princes and nobles, the Prince Chow Fah Mongkut, and Siam entered upon a new era in her history; for this remarkable man by his devotion to study during the twenty-seven years of his seclusion from public affairs in a monastery, while his inferior half-brother, who had artfully supplanted him, reigned with so strong a hand, and by his intimate association with the American missionaries, and especially by his having been long under the almost daily tutelage of one of them, had become emancipated from many of the prejudices of his countrymen, and prepared to set the wheels of progress in motion.

Bright now were the prospects of the missionaries. Their teachers and their old servants returned, and, as the sovereign was known to be personally friendly to the missionaries, they were treated with respect by all ranks, and had everywhere a civil hearing for the message they brought. Indeed, they were assured from the throne on the day of the coronation, when they were invited to the palace, that they should be unmolested in their work. Lest, however, they should be too exultant in their new hopes, Providence was pleased to order trials and bereavements to each of the missions. Mrs. Bush had an attack of hemorrhage from the lungs, that on the 22d of July, after six short weeks of illness, resulted in her death. No, it was *not death*, but *a translation.* To those who witnessed her triumphant departure it seemed as if her spirit, when it reached the threshold of the gate of the heavenly city, turned to tell them what she saw.

"Beautiful!" she said—"beautiful! Heaven is one great beauty."

Early in January, in the midst of the other discouragements, the Baptist mission had suffered a great calamity. A fire in the night, doubtless of incendiary origin, had destroyed their dwelling-houses, chapel, printing-press — including a large edition just completed of the New Testament in Siamese—and nearly all their personal effects. Their loss amounted to ten or twelve thousand dollars. A temporary house of bamboo and thatch was hastily thrown up, but new dwellings must be erected, and from exposure to the sun and fatigue in procuring timber for the rebuilding Dr. Jones was taken ill, and, his constitution being impaired by a score of years spent in the tropics, he succumbed to disease on the 13th of September, and passed peacefully away—an irreparable loss to his mission and to Siam. He was a man of excellent judgment, piety and culture, and had a rare mastery of the Siamese language with its curious idioms that made him most acceptable to the natives as a preacher and writer. His translation of the New Testament and several tracts that he prepared attest his scholarship in Siamese and his ability.

Just before this sad event the Rev. William Ashmore and wife, who had been sent out by the Baptist Board to take charge of the Chinese department, arrived in Bangkok.

And now the Presbyterian mission obtained at last what it had so many years sought in vain. An eligible location was tendered them near the centre of the city, not far below the palace, adjoining one of the largest wats and in the neighborhood of several others.

About this time the king, with a singular appreciation for an Oriental monarch of the importance of female education, in a note in which he says he "desires several ladies who live with him to acquire knowledge in English," invited the wives of the missionaries to visit his palace and alternate in giving regular instruction to his numerous family. Gladly and with much interest did Mrs. Mattoon, Mrs. Dr. Bradley and Mrs. Dr. Jones, representing the three missions in the field, enter upon their work—*the first zenana-teaching ever attempted in the East.** Twenty-one of the thirty young wives of the king, and several of his royal sisters, composed the class. During the three years these labors continued much Christian as well as secular knowledge was imparted to these secluded ones—*saving* knowledge, it was hoped, in the case of one at least, a princess of the highest rank.

As soon as the rains were over and possession was given of their new premises, Messrs. Mattoon and Bush proceeded to enclose the ground, dig trenches for the foundations, purchase rafts of teak-wood logs and superintend their sawing by hand into the timber and planks required to put up two plain but convenient brick dwelling-houses. Mr. Bush's experience and practical skill here proved of great value. Before the rains fairly set in, early in June, one house was finished, and Mrs. Mattoon and family removed into it from the floating house on the river, lent to them by a friendly prince, which had been their temporary home while the new building was going up. They had found it not an undesirable residence, though one memorable dark night, having been detached from its moorings that it might slip away from a fire that was raging on a river-bank near, through the carelessness of a servant it got adrift and carried its inmates off against their will, with a rapid tide, seven or eight miles down the river before its progress could be arrested. The truant dwelling, however, with all its contents undisturbed, with the turn of the tide was brought back to its old moorings safe and sound.

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* This was in 1851. Instruction was *first given in zenanas in India in 1858* [or 1857].

The other dwelling-house was soon completed and occupied. The mission having now a home of its own and ample room, in October, 1852, a boarding-school for Siamo-Chinese boys was opened, and Quakieng, who was an experienced Chinese teacher, put in charge—the free tuition the lads would receive half of each day in their father-tongue being, it was hoped, an inducement that would attract such pupils within the reach of Christian instruction.

Before the first year ended twenty-seven had been enrolled. All attempts to gather *Siamese* boys in a school had failed thus far, though some individual scholars had been taught, as the wats gave free tuition to all, and merit was made by providing the priests with their pupil-attendants.

An interesting, amiable young Hainan Chinese, See Teug by name, had the year previous been baptized by Mr. Mattoon, in whose family he long had lived—the first of that people to become a Protestant Christian—and gave pleasing evidence of his love to his Saviour by the interest he manifested in bringing his fellow-countrymen to the knowledge of the gospel. A Sabbath evening-service was held for their benefit, the new convert acting as Bible-reader and interpreter. Afterward a Hainan teacher was secured, and for many years a Hainan-Chinese department of the boarding-school maintained, in the hope of bringing under saving Christian influences some of the many Chinese in Siam from the island of Hainan, which had been hitherto entirely unreached by Protestant missionary effort. A day-school for the Peguan girls in the neighborhood was started by Mrs. Mattoon, who had also two or three native girls in her own family under Christian training.

About this time great numbers came to the houses of the missionaries for books and conversation on religious matters, fifty or sixty in a day, attendance upon whom required the whole time of one of the brethren. Over a thousand Christian books a month were thus put into the hands of intelligent readers. Young priests and boys from the neighboring wats were frequent visitors, and as no second volume was given until they had been questioned on the contents of the first, and many thus received the whole series of the publications of the mission, much Scripture truth must have been imparted. So eager were some of these lads for books that they would swim across the river to get one, and then swim back with but one hand, holding up the prize high and dry with the other.

And now followed a time of great outward prosperity—the government friendly, the missionaries enjoying the respect of all classes, their schools flourishing, their books eagerly sought. The mission of the American Missionary Association, as a special token of the king's regard for its senior member, Dr. Bradley, was permitted to occupy a very desirable location at the mouth of the principal canal of the city, the chief channel of travel west.

In December, 1852, Mr. Bush, whose health required a change, left for the United States.

The next year Dr. House made a tour of great interest, partly on foot, partly on elephants, to Korat, an important inland town north-east of Bangkok, over in the great valley of the Cambodia River, returning by Kabin, and distributing many books and making known to many a surprised listener in a wide district of country never before visited by a missionary, or a white man even, the strange doctrine—strange to them—of the being of a *living* God and salvation without personal merit freely granted for another's sake. Much of Mr. Mattoon's time was now given to the work of making a revised translation of the New Testament into Siamese.

In 1854 a Mormon missionary found his way to Siam, but, meeting no encouragement, soon withdrew. The Siamese did not need any urging to the practice of polygamy.

Prof. Silsby left Siam in May of this year, and Mr. J. H. Chandler and wife returned, and with them came the Rev. Robert Telford and wife to assist in the Chinese department of the Baptist mission.

In January, 1855, Dr. Lane of the A. M. A., on account of the health of his family, and Miss Morse of the Baptist mission, took their final leave of Siam.

The time was now at hand when Siam, so long secluded and almost unknown, was to enter more fully into the family of nations by treaties of commerce and friendship with the great powers of the

West. Sir John Bowring, then governor of Hong Kong, arrived March, 1855, as British ambassador to the court of Siam, and was cordially welcomed by the king, with whom he had previously been in friendly correspondence. Aided by his able secretary of legation, Consul Parkes (now Sir Harry Parkes, British minister to Pekin), in one short month, in one week of actual negotiation, he overturned the customs and prejudices of centuries, and had conceded to him by the enlightened ruler of the land and his ministers of state the abolition of all the government monopolies of articles of trade, the removal of the old foolish prohibition of the export of rice and teak-wood, moderate duties on imports, the residence of consuls to protect the interests of their countrymen, and liberty for British subjects to travel and take up land in the country. This treaty opened the way for all subsequent treaties with other nations, and so opened Siam to the commerce of the world.

Dr. House availed himself, when the embassy left Siam, of the courteous offer of a free passage to Singapore, to make a brief visit to his native land to seek for the reinforcements his mission so greatly needed. While at home he was ordained and married, and, re-embarking with Mrs. House and the Rev. A. B. Morse and wife, reached Bangkok again in July, 1856, greatly to the joy of the solitary mission family that with faith and patience unwearied had been "holding the fort."

Meanwhile, a month or two before, our United States government had by its ambassador, Townsend Harris, Esq., negotiated a treaty almost identical with the British, and, to the great satisfaction of the Siamese, Mr. Mattoon was appointed consul. Dr. William M. Wood, late surgeon-general U. S. Navy, who accompanied the embassy, testifies in his book, *Fankwei*, that the "unselfish kindness of the American missionaries, their patience, sincerity and truthfulness, have won the confidence and esteem of the natives, and in some degree transferred those sentiments to the nation represented by the missions, and prepared the way for the free national intercourse now commencing. It was very evident that much of the apprehension they felt in taking upon themselves the responsibilities of a treaty with us would be diminished if they could have the Rev. Mr. Mattoon as the first U. S. consul to set the treaty in motion." Mr. Mattoon accepted the office, however, only till a successor should be appointed at Washington. Meanwhile, his mission-work—preaching, translating, etc.—was not intermitted.

In 1856 the schools reported forty-seven in attendance, and every department of the work was in successful operation.

Another station in Bangkok being thought desirable, and a large lot with broad frontage on the river on its west bank in the lower suburbs of the city becoming available, it was secured, and Mr. Morse (a bamboo cottage being put up for his temporary residence) removed there and commenced building a brick dwelling-house. Ere its walls were half up he was completely prostrated by disease, and forced, to the great regret of his associates, to leave the field and the work he loved, and for which he was so well qualified. Previous to his leaving, Mrs. Mattoon, finding an American ship loading at Bangkok to sail direct for the United States in March of this year, had availed herself of the opportunity to make a visit home for rest and to recruit her strength, exhausted by ten years' toil in a tropical climate.

It being necessary to go on and complete the building begun by Mr. Morse, and the new premises there having the advantage of carrying on some departments of missionary work, and not being subject to ground-rent, as was the other place, it was deemed best to give up the upper station, dispose of the buildings there and establish the Presbyterian mission permanently on the newly-purchased ground. The removal of the mission to the new station, four miles below, was made in November, 1857, and another dwelling-house immediately commenced.

This was nearly completed when, June 20, 1858, the Rev. Jonathan Wilson and wife and the Rev. Daniel McGilvary arrived. Messrs. W. and McG. had been room-mates at Princeton Seminary; while there had both felt the claims upon them of missionary work, and had become much interested in Siam; but after graduating Mr. McGilvary was called to become pastor over a church in North Carolina, and Mr. Wilson had gone out as a missionary to the Choctaw Indians. Years passed, and each had been led by the pressing needs of the field to offer himself to the Board for service there, and most gratifying was it to find that they were to be sent out together.

The number of ordained ministers now warranted the formation of a Presbytery, and the Presbytery of Siam was duly constituted September 1, 1858.

In the study of the language, aiding in the instruction of the pupils in the boarding-school and in tract-distribution the new brethren found enough to busy them.

In January, 1859, the Rev. S. Mattoon, who had then for some twelve years without intermission borne the burden and heat of the day, returned to the United States for the much-needed change, rejoining his family there.

Signs of more than usual religious interest appeared about this time, and one of the native teachers, Nai Chune, applied for Christian baptism. So deep, however, was the duplicity of this people generally, and so many who professed interest in the teachings of the gospel had proved to be influenced by purely selfish motives, that when this case of genuine conviction of the truth occurred, just what they had been hoping and praying for so long, the brethren distrusted the sincerity of the man, and put him off from week to week until fairly compelled to admit that the miracle of converting grace had actually been wrought even in a Siamese, and they could no longer forbid water that he should be baptized. The day of Nai Chune's baptism (August 7, 1859) was to them a jubilee indeed. With tears of joy they gathered in at last, after more than twelve years of toil unblest, the first-fruits of their labor among the Siamese.

It was singular that this same year (in December) the mission should lose its first church-member—Quakieng, the faithful, consistent Chinese native assistant. He was attacked by cholera and died, commending his departing spirit to his heavenly Father. With his death the Hokien-Chinese instruction in the mission-school ceased, and soon after the teaching of the Hainan Chinese in their native tongue. The school was too well established now to need to hold out this inducement to attract pupils.

The cholera was quite prevalent in April, and Mrs. Wilson nearly became a victim. Other diseases set in, and she lingered on the borders of the spirit-land till July 10th, when she closed a blameless Christian life and entered into the home of the blessed with words of rapture on her lips.

The stricken band in the Presbyterian mission were greatly cheered and strengthened two months after by the return (September 15th) of Mr. Mattoon and family, and with them the Rev. N. A. McDonald and the Rev. S. G. McFarland and their wives.

Up to this time the Presbyterian mission had been dependent for its printing upon sister-missions, but now a press of its own, sent out by the Board, was set up and soon in successful operation. A year or two later it reported an issue of more than half a million of pages annually.

In December, Mr. McGilvary was married to Miss Sophia R. Bradley, eldest daughter of Rev. D. B. Bradley, M. D., of the American Missionary Association. This cool season Messrs. Wilson and McFarland accompanied Mr. Telford of the Baptist Board on a trip for distribution of Siamese and Chinese tracts down the east coast of the gulf as far as Chantaboon.

With such an accession to the members of the Presbyterian mission as they had lately received, it was now deemed that the time had come for them to establish a new station somewhere outside of Bangkok, and Petchaburee was fixed upon as its location. This is an important inland town, some eighty-five miles south-west from the capital city, situated in the midst of charming scenery in a fertile and populous district of country. The acting governor of the province favored the having a station there, and offered every assistance; and this in a place where the authorities treated very uncivilly the first missionaries who visited it, and arrested those who received books at their hands. Ground having been purchased and the house they had secured made ready for them, in June, 1861, Messrs. McGilvary and McFarland, with their families, removed to Petchaburee. Another dwelling-house was soon under way, and a school opened on the premises, with the sons of the governor and lieutenant-governor enrolled among the pupils.

The name Petchaburee signifies the "city of diamonds," and soon after their arrival the missionaries found there, in the midst of the rubbish of heathen superstition and idolatry, a gem, a living stone of priceless value, that has since been taken to shine doubtless in the Redeemer's crown. It was a native Siamese, Nai Kawn by name, from a village near, who called upon them to place his son under their instruction. The lad already knew the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer. The father himself surprised them by his facility in quoting Scripture, repeating whole chapters of Romans; and on conversing with him it appeared that, though he had never seen a missionary, from some two or three portions of the Scripture and a few Christian tracts that had fallen in his hands, taught by the Spirit of God, he had gained, and accepted too, a wonderfully clear view of salvation by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Gladly he received other portions of the New and Old Testament, and, further instructed, he became a fearless and efficient witness for the truth before his countrymen of high and low degree.

The brethren at Petchaburee, with the freest access to the Siamese everywhere, found a peculiarly inviting field of labor among a colony of Laos numbering ten thousand or so, settled near them. These people, adherents of a prince who had failed in his struggle for the throne, had fled in a body from their own land in the far northeast some eighty years before, and, seeking refuge in the dominion of the king of Siam, had been assigned a home and lands in this fertile province. They were made serfs of the king, however, and much of the time had to work for their new royal master. A preaching-place was secured in one of their villages, and these toiling exiles seemed to be interested hearers of the word.

But to return to Bangkok. In December, 1861, Esther, a young native woman who had been brought up in the family of Mrs. Mattoon, was baptized,—the first native female member of the Presbyterian mission-church of Siam.

On February, 2, 1862, the Rev. S. C. George and wife, who had been sent out by the Presbyterian Board, arrived in Bangkok. Mrs. George was a sister of Mrs. Johnson, one of the noble company of martyred missionaries put to death by Nana Sahib's orders at Cawnpore. Much faithful colporteur work in the city and suburbs was done this year by Mr. Wilson, and mission-tours were made to Camburi and Prabat by him and other missionaries. A neat mission-chapel which had been built on the mission premises without drawing upon the funds of the Board was opened for divine service in May. In December, Messrs. McDonald and House, with Mr. Telford of the Baptist mission, made a coasting-trip to Chantaboon, distributing many Siamese and Chinese books and tracts there and at other places visited on the way.

The first fruit of the labor of the Petchaburee missionaries was gathered in February, 1863, when Kao, a young Siamese of much promise, was baptized. He had entered Mr. McFarland's service that he might acquire a knowledge of English, but he was instructed also in the way of life, and learned that which made him wise unto salvation. One short month, and he left his dying testimony to the excellence of the new religion he had embraced. Called away by sudden and severe illness, his last words were, "Why do you weep? I am not afraid to die. I love the Lord Jesus. I am going to heaven. My heart is happy." There were others in Petchaburee who soon after had the courage to renounce Buddhism and publicly avow themselves Christians. May 10, 1863, a Siamese man and his wife, who had been long in Mr. McGilvary's employ, and a young Siamo-Chinese in Mr. McFarland's, were baptized and a church organized in Petchaburee. It was an occasion of great and joyful interest to the brethren there.

In May the Rev. Robert Telford and wife of the Baptist mission, after nine years' labor among the Chinese of Siam, were obliged to leave Siam in quest of health, embarking for China.

Mr. McGilvary, in his labors for their spiritual good, had become so much interested in the Laos people settled near him in Petchaburee that he was anxious to learn if something could not be done for the evangelization of the hundreds of thousands of Laos in the tributary states to the north, as yet unreached by the gospel. Accordingly, with the consent of the mission, he made in that cool season, with Mr. Wilson, an exploring-tour to the hitherto unvisited North Laos country, journeying partly by boat, partly on elephants, as far as Cheung Mai, the capital. The travelers were well received by the authorities, and after an absence of eleven weeks returned strongly impressed with the practicability and desirableness of establishing a mission among that interesting people.

The varied work of the mission at the two stations was carried on as in former years, some engaged in the boys' school, others having charge of the printing-press or translating the Scriptures or preparing tracts and catechisms, maintaining the preaching-services, conversing with visitors, distributing tracts or medicines, vaccinating native children, studying the language with native teachers, or conducting the daily morning service, which all on the mission premises or in mission employ were required to attend, and when, with the brief exposition of the Scripture read, much religious instruction was given. The wives of the missionaries also did much for the instruction of the native females in their families and neighborhoods in reading and sewing and in Bible-classes on the Sabbath.

In February, 1864, Dr. and Mrs. House left on a visit to the United States, the state of Mrs. House's health requiring it; and a few months later Mrs. Mattoon, whose asthmatic trouble had returned, was compelled to take her final leave of Siam. Her husband remained to finish the important work on which he had long been engaged of making a revised translation of the New Testament into Siamese. Mr. Wilson, whose health had become impaired, accompanied Mrs. Mattoon and her children to America.

In December, 1864, the Rev. Dr. Dean, whose shattered constitution had been restored by eleven years' sojourn in his native land, gladly returned (with Mrs. Dean, Miss F. Dean and the Rev. C. H. Chilcott) to take charge again of the Baptist Board's mission-work for the Chinese and of the Chinese church in Bangkok, which he had founded. Mr. Chilcott was removed by death before he had entered on the second year of his missionary life.

In December, 1865, the Rev. S. Mattoon took his final and regretful leave of the land and the people for whose good he had labored so long and so faithfully—a loss to the community as well as to the mission. From the date of his embarkation for the field to that of his arrival in the United States on his return was just twenty years.

April 4, 1866, the Rev. P. L. Carden and wife arrived to join the Presbyterian mission, and in July the Rev. J. Wilson returned with Mrs. Kate M. Wilson. In July also came Miss A. M. Fielde, to be connected with the Chinese department of the Baptist mission. Dr. and Mrs. House returned in December from their visit home, with health renewed.

The industrial school for girls in Petchaburee, which has since brought so many of the women and girls of that city under daily Christian instruction and training in habits of neatness and industry, commenced by Mrs. McFarland the year previous, was now an established success. The boys' boarding-school at Bangkok prospered under Mr. George's superintendence. The fall of 1866 was a season of marked religious interest at the Bangkok station; there were several decided cases of conversion, and a daily prayer-meeting instituted by the converts was well sustained.

In 1867 (October 1) the missionaries write: "During the past twelve months more additions have been made to the native church than in all the previous years of its history." Eleven had been received at Bangkok and four at Petchaburee—nine of the number pupils of the mission-schools.

This year (1867) was memorable as witnessing the commencement of the Presbyterian mission in North Laos. On the 3d of January its pioneer missionary, the Rev. Daniel McGilvary, with his family, embarked on what was to prove a three months' voyage up the Menam. Having, besides the strong current of the river, no less than thirty-two decided rapids to surmount in their boats, it was not till the 1st of April that Cheung Mai, their destination, was reached. The king gave them a friendly reception and provided them with a temporary home. Numbers visited them daily, and gradually they acquired the confidence of the people, who heard them gladly.

The year following the Rev. Jonathan Wilson and wife undertook the formidable journey, and left Bangkok to join the McGilvarys at Cheung Mai. Not long after their arrival, during a visit of Dr. House to the new mission, a church was organized in that remote heathen city, with many an earnest prayer that the "little one might become a thousand." On his way thither over the Laos Mountains, Dr. House had a narrow escape from death. The elephant on which he had been riding unexpectedly turned upon him, struck him down with its trunk and then wounded him severely whilst attempting to transfix him with its tusks.

In May, 1868, the Rev. P. L. Carden, who had lastly been stationed at Petchaburee, was obliged to withdraw from the field on account of the serious illness of his wife. This year the Rev. Samuel J. Smith and wife (formerly Mrs. Dr. Jones), who had been so long connected with the American Baptist Board, became self-supporting, Mr. Smith having charge of a large printing-establishment and a weekly English newspaper, but maintaining Sabbath preaching and other services in Siamese, and Mrs. Smith, able and indefatigable as a teacher and writer, doing much in the work of instruction and in other ways for the good of Siam.

As Mr. Chandler's connection with the Board had been severed some ten years before, the Siamese department of the Baptist mission ceased now to exist.

An unusually protracted total eclipse of the sun was to occur this year in August, and the Siamese dominions afforded the very best place in the world to observe it. His Majesty the king of Siam, himself a practical astronomer and very fond of the science, generously invited the French astronomical expedition to be his guests on the occasion—the governor of Singapore also, and the foreigners in Bangkok generally, including the missionaries. He went himself with his entire court, with quite a fleet of steamers, down the west coast of the gulf, some two hundred miles, to Hua Wan, the point selected, where the jungle had been cleared and a bamboo palace with other buildings had been put up, expending upon his right royal hospitalities in the whole affair about ninety-six thousand dollars. A malarial fever taken there brought on, not long after his return to his capital, the death of this martyr to science, the most enlightened of all the sovereigns of Asia. He died with Buddha's last words as the last upon his lips: "All that exists is unreliable." He used to say to the missionaries, "The sciences I receive, astronomy, geology, chemistry,—these I receive; the Christian religion I do not receive; many of your countrymen do not receive it." And now he died as the philosopher dieth, stepping out into the darkness beyond, on which neither science nor Buddhism shed a ray of light or gleam of comfort. As he had chosen to live without God in the world, so he died without hope—the blessed hope of eternal life which sustains the dying Christian, and might have been his. In the death of the king the missionaries lost, some of them, a kind personal friend and "well-wisher," as he used to sign himself, and all a friendly-disposed, liberal-minded sovereign, who put no obstacles in the way of their evangelizing his people.

The king's eldest son, Prince Chulalongkorn, then a youth of fifteen years only, was made his successor by the unanimous choice of the grandees of the realm. His royal father prized too highly the knowledge and all that came to him through the study of English not to have his heir-apparent taught that tongue. So from his early boyhood an English governess had been provided for him and his numerous brothers and sisters. From this accomplished lady he doubtless derived many excellent ideas and principles, though by the terms of her engagement she was expressly forbidden to teach Christianity to any in the palace. After she left Siam he was for several months under the tuition of Mr. Chandler.

The young king won golden opinions from the missionaries—who sought an early audience to express their condolence, congratulations and best wishes—by his prepossessing manners, his intelligence and the evident sincerity of his assurances of good-will.

During his minority the affairs of the kingdom were successfully administered by the regent, the one who had been prime minister during the late reign—a man of great executive ability. The conservatism of this ablest and wisest statesman of Siam was perhaps a needful check upon what were possibly too strong tendencies toward reform in the youthful sovereign, who would fain have abolished slavery for debt and suppressed gambling by an immediate decree. But his minority was well improved. He was the first ruler of Siam to break over the superstition that would prevent his setting foot outside of his own dominions, and before he was twenty had visited other countries—the first year Singapore and Java; in a subsequent one, British Burmah, Calcutta, Bombay, and other cities of British India—intelligently observing everything, and returning with many ideas of improvements to be made at home.

In January, 1869, the missionaries were reinforced by the addition of the Rev. James W. Van Dyke and the Rev. John Carrington and their wives to the Presbyterian mission, and Rev. S. B. Partridge to the Baptist. Mr. Van Dyke was assigned at once to the Petchaburee station as a colleague to Mr. McFarland, then laboring alone. Mr. Carrington remained at Bangkok, and while acquiring the language gave valuable assistance in the school.

At the Laos mission the brethren had much to encourage them. The king of Cheung Mai had granted them a spacious lot of ground on the river-bank for their homes; the gospel truth they preached was working in the hearts of those who heard it, and one, whose heart had been won before, when the falsity of his own sacred books' scientific teachings had been shown by the fulfillment of the foreign teachers' prediction of the great eclipse, was brave enough to renounce Buddhism and receive Christian baptism. The name of this first convert was Nan Intah. Others too were brought out of darkness into light, till in the first seven months of the year 1869 seven converts were baptized.

But a storm was gathering, soon to burst upon them. The king, a brave warrior, but a narrow-minded, arbitrary, superstitious ruler, who had never comprehended their true errand, though apparently friendly, when he saw they were beginning to draw his people over to the new faith determined to uproot it from his dominions. He first attempted to get rid of the missionaries themselves, forwarding a complaint against them to the authorities at Bangkok and requesting their removal. The nature of the charge so illustrates the superstition of the people and the character of the man that the story of it must be given.

On the 31st of March, 1869, there was received at the U. S. consulate a communication of which the following is a literal translation: "Chow Phya Pooterapai, Minister of the Interior, begs to inform the acting consul of the United States of America that Pra Chow Kawilorot, the king of Cheung Mai, has sent down letters to Prince Hluang Hluang and the Prime Minister and myself, the purport of all being the same—viz. that whereas in former times the principalities of Cheung Mai and Lampang and Lampoon had never been subject to visitation of famine, now for two years—the year of the Tiger [1866–67] and the year of the Rabbit [1867–68]—there has been a scarcity of rice. It is evident that what has befallen the country is because in these lands, where no foreigner ever before had come to live permanently, now at this time the missionary McGilvary, who has come as a teacher of religion, had taken up his residence in Cheung Mai. Hence these calamities have come upon them. He, the king of Cheung Mai, begs that the consul be made to issue an order withdrawing [lit. "pulling up"] the missionary McGilvary and requiring his return. What is proper to be done in this matter? You are requested to take the subject into consideration."

To this letter Mr. McDonald, who, singularly enough, happened to be acting U. S. consul at that time, under date of April 1st replied substantially as follows: "He has received the communication of His Excellency the Minister of Foreign Affairs forwarding the complaint of the king of Cheung Mai, alleging Mr. McGilvary to be the cause of the famine in his dominions and requesting his removal. In reply he begs to say that it strikes him as rather singular to attribute the famine during the year of the Tiger [1866–67] to Mr. McG.'s taking up his residence in Cheung Mai, inasmuch as the scant harvest of that year had already been reaped before Mr. McG. had arrived, or even left Bangkok to go up to Cheung Mai, for it was not till Jan. 3, 1867, that he set out on his journey. And this year [1868–69], though Mr. McG. is still at Cheung Mai, we have tidings of an abundant harvest there. Moreover, in 1865–66, Korat and other towns in that quarter experienced a severe famine, and yet no foreigner had ever resided in that region of country. Orders will be given to Mr. McGilvary so to deport himself that no famine can be attributed to him hereafter; but as to his (the consul's) being required to withdraw Mr. McG. and constrain him to return, it would be manifestly wrong. His Excellency (the Minister of the Interior) and the Siamese government gave consent to Mr. McG.'s going up to Cheung Mai, and he went on the invitation of the king of Cheung Mai himself also. Moreover, he has expended on the removal of his family and goods no small amount of money. That he (the consul) should be asked to recall Mr. McG., and constrain him to return, without any transgression of the laws alleged against him—in fact, without any reason whatever—would not be right. The consul trusts His Excellency will duly consider this matter, and that his views may accord with what is just and right in the case."

The Minister of the Interior in his reply, dated April 3d, states that "his views coincide with the consul's. Mr. McG. had in no respect offended against any of the laws of the country. His Excellency has some solicitude about the matter, however, inasmuch as the king of Cheung Mai is a difficult man to deal with, being often arbitrary and unscrupulous. He is constrained to say this much, that the consul may be apprised of the true state of things."

The warning was kindly given, but at Cheung Mai the king, failing in this attempt to have the foreign teachers expelled, concealed his hostility to them and their work, and outwardly all went on as usual. Meanwhile, the truth was working in the hearts of not a few who heard it, and the truth made them brave to confess their new-found Lord and Saviour. In seven months from the time when Nan Intah had been received six more Laos men had professed themselves Christians and been baptized. Then suddenly the storm that had been long gathering burst upon the infant church. On the 12th Sept., 1869, two of the newly-made converts were seized by orders from the king on some false pretext, painfully pinioned, and after a night's imprisonment, without trial, barbarously put to death, being beaten with clubs on the neck, one of them pierced also with a spear. "Faithful unto death," who can doubt they have received from the Lord Jesus, to whom dying they commended their departing spirits, the crown of life, the martyr's crown, for they were as true martyrs as any who were slain in the cruel Nero's day? The other five church-members, taking flight, contrived to secrete themselves from those who "sought their lives to destroy them."

The situation of the missionaries themselves was now perilous in the extreme. They and their wives and their little ones were in the hands of a merciless, self-willed, reckless, bigoted despot, who hated them and their doctrines, and were five hundred miles away from consular or other aid. Succeeding at last in getting a letter to their friends at Bangkok, the brethren of the mission, startled by the tidings, and not knowing indeed if the Laos missionaries were yet in the land of the living, hastened to lay the matter before the regent. He kindly promised to despatch a special commissioner to Cheung Mai at once with any missionaries that might go, with stringent orders that the missionaries there and their families receive from the Laos authorities the protection the treaty between Siam and the United States guaranteed them. He declined, however, to interfere in behalf of the native Christians.

Messrs. McDonald and George bravely volunteered on behalf of the mission to go to the comfort and aid of their brethren in peril, and set out on the long journey, proceeding by boat to Rahang, thence traveling over the Laos mountains on elephants with the Siamese commissioner and his attendants. In a stormy interview which the missionaries had with the king in the presence of the commissioner he was forced to admit that the two men had been put to death because they had become Christians, and he avowed his set purpose "to kill all his people who should do the same." As to the missionaries, "they might remain, as the Siamese government had so ordered, but they must not teach religion nor make Christians."

The future of the Laos misson did indeed look dark, and there seemed to be no alternative but to withdraw from the land while this king reigned. But he who was thus "breathing out threatenings and slaughter" speedily had his power for evil taken from him and was called to his account by a higher Power. Soon after, during a visit he made early in the year 1870 to Bangkok to attend the imposing ceremonies at the cremation of his late suzerain, the king of Siam, he was taken ill. His sickness increasing, he hastened home, but did not live to enter again the walls of his capital, and the supreme power passed into the hands of the second king, his son-in-law, who from the first, with his truly noble queen, had been kindly disposed to the missionaries.

In February, 1870, Mr. McDonald, whose health had become seriously impaired, found it necessary to visit the United States, and left Siam with his family. A young Siamese who accompanied them, giving evidence of true conversion, was baptized by Mr. McDonald during his sojourn in America.

In April, 1871, Mrs. House was obliged to make a trip for a season to the more temperate clime of the United States, and, leaving her husband at his post, returned alone. This year C. W. Vrooman, M. D., was sent out as a medical missionary to the Laos. Proceeding to Cheung Mai after the rains, during his stay of a year and a half he accomplished a good work for the mission. Oct. 11, 1871, Miss Fielde of the Baptist mission to the Chinese left Siam, eventually to join the mission of the Board in Swatow, China.

Toward the close of this year Mr. McDonald and family returned to Siam, and with them the

Rev. R. Arthur and wife, the Rev. J. Culbertson and Miss E. S. Dickey. Miss Dickey proved a most efficient and acceptable teacher in the mission-school at Bangkok, and subsequently at Petchaburee. The last day of 1871 brought back to Siam, his native land, the Rev. Cornelius Bradley and wife, to be associated with his father in the mission-work of the American Missionary Association.

In June, 1872, Ayuthia, the ancient capital of Siam, and still a town of considerable importance, was occupied as a missionary station by the Rev. J. Carrington and family, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur joining them before the expiration of the year, At Petchaburee their new chapel was dedicated with interesting services in August. In October, 1872, twenty church-members were reported at Petchaburee, and eighteen at Bangkok. In December, Mrs. House returned from her health-trip to America, accompanied by Miss Arabella Anderson.

The women of the Presbyterian Church at home were now waking up to realize their special privilege and duty to work and give and pray for the women and children of benighted heathen lands. The ladies of the Troy branch of the Albany Synodical Missionary Society, from which two laborers had gone out to Siam, becoming thus particularly interested in that country, had undertaken to establish a female boarding-school at Bangkok, and raised three thousand dollars for that purpose. A little before this a lot of ground on the west bank of the river, nearly opposite the palace of the second king, some five miles above the lower station, had been secured by the mission, and a dwelling-house partially completed on it. Mr. and Mrs. George, who were to have occupied it as a new station, having to return to the home-land, Mrs. George's health failing, the Board tendered the place and the building to the Troy ladies for their school purposes, on condition of their investing their own funds in the building and completing it. They accordingly took possession, Dr. and Mrs. House and Miss Anderson occupying it in December, 1873. The school was opened in May, 1874, in charge of Mrs. House and Miss Anderson, and by the close of the year had a large number of boarding pupils, some of them noblemen's daughters.

The year 1873 witnessed a great diminution of the number of the missionaries of the Presbyterian Board. In January the Rev. S. C. George, after eleven years' service as teacher, preacher and translator, left with Mrs. George, as has been already stated. February 8th the Rev. S. G. McFarland and his wife, after twelve and a half years of faithful and exhausting but successful labor for this heathen people's good, sought their much-needed and well-earned rest in their native land. April 19th the Rev. D. McGilvary of the Laos mission, who had been nearly fifteen years in the field, sailed from Bangkok with his family to revisit his friends and the churches in the United States. By the same steamer Miss Dickey also left, to find in the North China mission a more congenial climate. Aug. 12th, Dr. Vrooman sailed, having withdrawn from the Laos mission in June. Aug. 25th the Arthurs embarked for the United States, Mrs. Arthur's health having failed entirely.

But the great loss to Siam this year was by the death of the missionary of longest service in the field — the Rev. D. B. Bradley, M. D., who rested from his unceasing and varied labors for Siam and the Siamese, continued for thirty-nine years with undiminished faith and zeal, on the 23d of June.

During the months of June and July the cholera prevailed, carrying off in twenty days over five thousand victims, among them the eldest son of Mr. McDonald. In November, Maa Tuan, the eldest daughter of Quakieng, the former Chinese assistant, was received to church membership; two of his sons were afterward admitted. A translation of *Pilgrim's Progress*, made by the native elder of the Bangkok church, was printed this year and was in large demand.

The recoronation of the king took place in November, he having now obtained his majority. On taking the reins of government into his own hands, prompted by his own noble instincts, his inherited love of progress and sincere desire for the good of his people, he boldly ventured upon reforms that were startling to his old courtiers, and indeed to all who had known Old Siam. His coronation-day was marked by the abolition of the degrading custom practiced for centuries of requiring those of inferior rank to crouch and crawl on all fours like spaniels in the presence of their superiors. A still more remarkable change he sought to introduce was the giving up of some of his absolute power as sovereign, by creating a council of state and also a privy council, before whom all public measures were to be brought and discussed and approved before they could be decreed by the king as laws. In carrying out these and other well-planned reforms he received, however, but little sympathy from the old ex-regent and his party.

In 1874, to the great regret of all, the Rev. C. B. Bradley was compelled to leave the, to him, debilitating climate of Siam. With his family he embarked for California March 8th. Upon his departure the American Missionary Association withdrew altogether from the field, making over to the family of Dr. Bradley the mission premises and the printing-establishment. This last, in fact, had been built up by the energy and skill and labor of Dr. Bradley, and its earnings had for many years more than paid all the expenses of the mission.

The Presbyterian Board was now the only Board left to provide for the spiritual needs of the Siamese people. Would that the Church whose agent that Board is could be made to realize the blessedness of the privilege committed to her if improved, and the responsibility she incurs if unfaithful to her duty to these myriads of dying men and women!

Mr. Carrington too was forced by protracted illness in his family to take his final leave of Siam.

In the fall of 1874, Mr. and Mrs. McGilvary of the Laos mission, returning from their visit to America, arrived in Bangkok, and, being joined by Marion A. Cheek, M. D., the newly-appointed medical missionary to these people, who came out by a later steamer early in 1875, embarked for their remote post at Cheung Mai.

Under Dr. Cheek's escort Miss Mary L. Cort and Miss Susie D. Grimstead had come to join the Siam mission. Both were assigned to the station at Petchaburee. There Miss Cort has remained ever since, in labors abundant and manifold and with zeal and courage untiring.

Among the converts reported in 1875 was one long in the employ of the different missions as a printer, who had hardened his heart against the truths he had through the press helped make known to others, and grown old in sin, now constrained to yield to those truths and enter on a Christian life. Two sons of the old native Chinese assistant, Quakieng, who died in 1859, were also received, and the younger became a candidate for the ministry.

In April, Mrs. McDonald embarked for the United States with her children, to provide for their education there, her husband remaining at his post, preaching, superintending the press and translating the Scriptures of the Old Testament.

Oct. 19, 1875, the Rev. S. G. McFarland and Mrs. McFarland returned to Siam, and with them came the Rev. Eugene P. Dunlap and wife. On their way down the China Sea they encountered a typhoon and for many hours were in imminent danger.

Dr. Cheek was married in December to Miss Sarah A. Bradley, daughter of the late Rev. D. B. Bradley, M. D., and in February, 1876, Miss Arabella Anderson was married to the Rev. Henry V. Noyes of the Presbyterian mission in Canton, and left with him, to return to Siam no more. The place she had so well filled in the girls' boarding-school at Bangkok was taken by Miss Grimstead. The number of pupils then in attendance was twenty.

The health of Mrs. House had now become so seriously impaired by eight months' continuance of severe attacks of asthma that her longer stay in Siam was out of the question, and she was reluctantly obliged to hand over to others her cherished work of female education and the school for girls, now in successful operation. With like regret did her husband leave the people and the country for whose good nearly thirty years of his life had been given. Dr. and Mrs. H. left for home in March, 1876, taking with them two Siamese lads of eleven to be educated in the United States under their care.

Their departure made necessary the coming over of Mr. and Mrs. Van Dyke from Petchaburee to take charge of the upper station at Bangkok and assist Miss Grimstead in the management of the girls' school. This same year, in June, Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, with health quite broken by exhausting labor in their Laos mission, had to go to the United States to rest and recover strength. Mr. W. improved the opportunity to procure in America the casting of a font of Laos type—no easy task. At Cheung Mai this year the widow of one of the martyrs was baptized with her two daughters, and Nan Intah, the first Laos convert, had the happiness of seeing his wife and son-in-law received to the church, and not long after two daughters and a son.

In 1877 the first Siamese convert baptized in the Presbyterian mission, Nai Chune, was called to depart. He died as one who "*knew* in whom he believed," and said in parting from the missionary friend who visited him, "I must go first, but I will be waiting at the gate to welcome the rest of you when you come." This year Mr. McDonald rejoined his family in the United States, returning with them the year following. The state of Miss Grimstead's health compelled her return to America and the severance of her connection with the Board. The native churches received large accessions during the year, thirteen being added to the Bangkok church, twenty to the Petchaburee and ten to the church at Cheung Mai, making the total number of communicants in Siam one hundred and four, and in Laos nineteen. The king of Siam manifested his interest in the work of female education by the generous gift of a thousand dollars toward the building for this purpose the mission was erecting at Petchaburee. This sum was handsomely supplemented by twelve hundred and sixty dollars more, contributed by some of the higher princes and nobles.

Early in the year 1878 the Rev. J. M. McCanby arrived, and Miss Jennie Korsen—the last to take Miss Grimstead's place in the girls' boarding-school. The Rev. S. G. McFarland, D. D., withdrew this year from his connection with the mission, having been invited by His Majesty to take the presidency of the newly-planned King's College at Bangkok. The mission press during the twelve months, under Mr. Culbertson's energetic supervision, issued over a million pages of Scripture and other truth.

In October, 1878, Mr. Wilson, leaving Mrs. W. in America, as her health did not admit of her accompanying him, embarked on his return, and under his escort three lady missionary teachers—Miss Belle Caldwell for Siam, and Miss Edna S. Cole and Miss Mary Campbell for the Laos. Miss Korsen becoming Mrs. McCauley and removing to the lower station to assist her husband in charge of the boys' school, Miss Caldwell took her place at the school for girls. The boys' school under the McCauleys had a membership of fifty-five, and good progress was made in study.

An appeal having been made to the king of Siam by the missionaries to the Laos in behalf of certain oppressed native Christians, he was graciously pleased to issue (Sept. 29, 1878) a proclamation establishing religious toleration in Laos, and by implication throughout all his dominions.

Under the direction of the Presbytery of Siam two new churches were organized this year—one at the upper station of Bangkok, the other at Bangkaboon, a fishing-village near Petchaburee. The native Christians at Bangkok by their contributions provided for the erection of a house for the native preacher at Ayuthia, and the entire support of another assistant there. The total church-membership in Siam now was one hundred and thirty-three, and in Laos thirty-one.

Miss Mary E. Hartwell, who arrived with the McDonalds early in 1879, assisted Miss Caldwell in the girls' boarding-school, and Miss Hattie H. McDonald, who was now under appointment as a missionary teacher, taught in the boys' school, which came under her father's supervision when the McCauleys, who had been in charge, were compelled to remove to Petchaburee by the departure thence, in consequence of their failing health, of Mr. and Mrs. Dunlap, who had been there of late. The Dunlaps returned to the United States in November.

The lady teachers at Petchaburee, Misses Coffman and Cort, had then under their care seven different schools in and near that city, numbering nearly two hundred pupils. At Cheung Mai the new missionary teachers soon had in the school there, which Mrs. McGilvary had commenced, twenty-five girls, eighteen of whom were boarding pupils. Eighteen Laotian converts were reported this year. The Laos king, finding the premises of the mission too limited, bought an adjacent lot and generously presented it to the mission.

In February, 1880, Mr. Culbertson was married to Miss Caldwell. In August, Ernest A.

Sturge, M. D., sailed for Siam as a medical missionary, to be stationed at Petchaburee, and later in the year the Board sent out to the Siam mission the Rev. Mr. and Mrs. C. S. McClelland, with Miss Laura A. Olmstead. Miss Olmstead became Miss Hartwell's associate in the girls' school, and the McClellands went to Petchaburee. Mr. McCauley's constitution not enduring a tropical climate, he had, with his wife, to be transferred this year to the mission of the Presbyterian Board in Japan. The state of Mrs. McGilvary's health made a visit to the United States necessary for her, and at the close of the year Mr. and Mrs. Van Dyke and family, all seriously ill, after nearly twelve years' residence in the tropics, made their first visit home.

The boys' school, under Miss H. H. McDonald, numbered sixty-seven, of whom forty were boarding scholars. Notwithstanding the sad defection of the native elder in the First Church, Bangkok, and the absence for a while of any ordained missionary at Petchaburee, twenty-five new converts were reported in Siam this year. To the church in Laos thirty-nine were added, and in July a new church was constituted in the midst of a cluster of villages about nine miles from Cheung Mai. The Laos school, under Miss Cole's care chiefly, now numbered thirty-five, of whom twenty-two were boarders. Dr. McGilvary spent several months this year at the frontier town of Rahang, where two professed conversion, and in October he baptized six adults and organized a church in Lakon, one of the chief cities of North Laos, one hundred miles east of Cheung Mai.

In 1881, Mr. and Mrs. Culbertson left the field, Mrs. C. having lost her health, and Dr. McGilvary in March left Cheung Mai to rejoin his family in the United States. But one ordained missionary able to preach in the native language was now left in Siam, and one in Laos. Nor were any reinforcements sent out this year from home, though one in the field, Miss Mary McDonald, the second daughter of the Rev. N. A. McDonald, D. D., was appointed a missionary teacher. The new missionaries at Petchaburee and the lady teachers there were greatly tried by the contumacy and unchristian conduct of their oldest native helper and other church-members, and they suffered severely at the station from cholera, which prevailed as an epidemic. No less than thirty-two pupils and others on the mission premises were attacked by it. Dr. Sturge was the means of saving many lives in the town and vicinity.

The untimely death of Miss Mary Campbell of the Laos mission, by drowning in the Menam River, in February of this year, on her return from a brief health-trip to Bangkok, brought sadness to many hearts in America as well as in Siam.

And yet the year was not devoid of blessings. The schools prospered. Two useful Christian tracts in Siamese, composed by native church-members, were put in circulation. Dr. Sturge in September was married to Miss Turner, who became a valuable accession to the station at Petchaburee. One new church was formed in the Laos country, and no less than fifty adults received Christian baptism there.

In 1882 the Laos mission were called to part with their first Laos convert, long a model ruling elder, good old Nan Intah. Faithful and true, with a beautiful, loving trust in his Saviour, he bade his children and grandchildren a cheerful farewell, and went to be with Christ. Dr. Cheek's medical practice was this year greatly enlarged and very successful. About thirteen thousand patients were prescribed for, and thus much was done to break up their confidence in spirit-doctors and their superstitious fears. Twenty-three were added to the Laos churches.

In the Siam mission the Rev. Mr. and Mrs. McClelland were, by reason of his continued illness, forced to give up their mission-work and return to the United States. Miss Coffman and Miss Hattie McDonald also were obliged to return in consequence of ill-health. The whole burden of the schools in Petchaburee fell now upon Miss Cort. Dr. Sturge treated four thousand five hundred and fifty-two cases — twice the number of the previous year—and with the funds raised, mostly by himself, had built a small hospital. The girls' school, Bangkok, had thirty-seven names on its roll. An exhibit of their skill and industry, prepared for the Royal Centennial Exposition that came off this year in commemoration of the founding of Bangkok, so pleased His Majesty the king that he became the purchaser of the whole.

The greatly-needed reinforcements to the missions came this year, and several who had been home to recruit their health returned. Mr. Van Dyke sailed in July, leaving his wife with her children. In October, Mr. and Mrs. Dunlap gladly went back to their work in Siam, and with them, for the Siam mission, the Rev. C. D. and Mrs. McLaren and Miss Lillian M. Luinell. By the same Pacific mail-steamer went Rev. Dr. McGilvary and wife on their return to Laos, and as new recruits for that field the Rev. J. Hearst and wife, the Rev. S. G. Peoples and the Misses Griffin, Wirt, Wishard and Warner. On reaching Bangkok, the whole party were very graciously received by the king, of whom they obtained, through the U. S. minister to Siam, General Halderman, an audience, and on December 13th the large company for Cheung Mai was on its way up the river. The Baptist mission to the Chinese, that had now for years been maintained in successful operation by the veteran missionaries Dr. and Mrs. Dean, unaided save by native helpers, was at last reinforced by the arrival of the Rev. L. A. Eaton, Dec. 15, 1882. Mrs. Maria M. Dean, who for the benefit of her feeble health had been constrained to leave her husband alone and visit the States in the spring of 1881, was on the eve of returning to Siam when she was suddenly called (January 16, 1883) to exchange earth for heaven.

The joy of those in the field at such a welcome addition to their number as the opening year had brought them was, however, soon diminished. In March, only four months after his arrival in Bangkok, Mr. McLaren was snatched away by death, to the great regret of all, for he was a man of unusual promise. The Laos party suffered greatly from sickness after they reached Cheung Mai. Mr. Hearst was so prostrated by malarial fever that he was obliged to leave the Laos country, and, before the year was out, Siam itself for China and Japan. In the latter country his health so greatly improved that he hopes to remain and labor there. Dr. Cheek, with strength exhausted by his long and arduous labors, greatly needed change and rest, and with his family and Miss Edna Cole, whose health had become quite impaired, left Siam for a visit to the United States, arriving in New York in September, 1883.

Rev. Mr. Fulton of the Presbyterian mission in Canton was married to Miss Wishard, and toward the close of the year 1883, Mr. Peoples of Cheung Mai to Miss Wirt, and Miss Luinell to Mr. S. Gross, a layman in the employ of the Petchaburee mission.

The number of the communicants reported in the four churches connected with the Siam mission at the close of 1882 was 148; in the five connected with the Laos mission, 144, of whom 23 were received during the year; total, 292. There were many additions to this number during the year 1883. Petchaburee especially was favored with quite a revival of interest in spiritual matters. The faithful discipline that had been exercised in the church there the year previous, and the zealous labors of Mr. Dunlap, who returned followed and upheld by the prayers of many of the Christian women of America whom his earnest words had interested in his work while at home, resulted in the penitential return of many wanderers and in the addition of 56 communicants during the ten months preceding October 1st.

One more mission family was sent out during the year 1883—the Rev. Chalmers Martin and wife, who, embarking for the East from New York Sept. 29th, re-embarked in January, 1884, at Bangkok, on a native river-boat for the distant station at Cheung Mai.

In reviewing the history of the mission-work in the kingdom of Siam well may the Christian Church—the Presbyterian Church in particular—"thank God and take courage." Buried in the deepest shadows of heathenish night, it long seemed as if the day of Siam's awaking to welcome the light of the gospel would never dawn. But it came at last. The Lord had a people there whom he would call to the knowledge of himself, and there were men and women "willing to endure all things for the elect's sake," assured through all those years of almost utter barrenness that they or some one would yet "reap if they fainted not;" and then the Board, with everything to discourage it, *never gave up*, and so reinforcements were sent out and new fields opened and manned, and schools for girls as well as boys established and maintained, and the translation of the Bible carried on to completion, and Christian hymnals prepared, and catechisms and tracts, and the printing-press kept busy, and its issues distributed far and wide in city and hamlet, along the many rivers and canals, and the gospel message preached in mission-chapels and idol-temples and by the wayside, till now (1884) the truth has taken root in the land, and there are in the nine Christian churches in Siam and Laos, as we have seen, more than three hundred and fifty men and women, once idolaters and without hope in the world, who know the true God and love and try to serve him, and who rejoice, as we do, in hope of eternal life through Jesus Christ his Son.

PART IV.

LAOS.

CHAPTER XXII.

LAOS LAND AND LIFE.

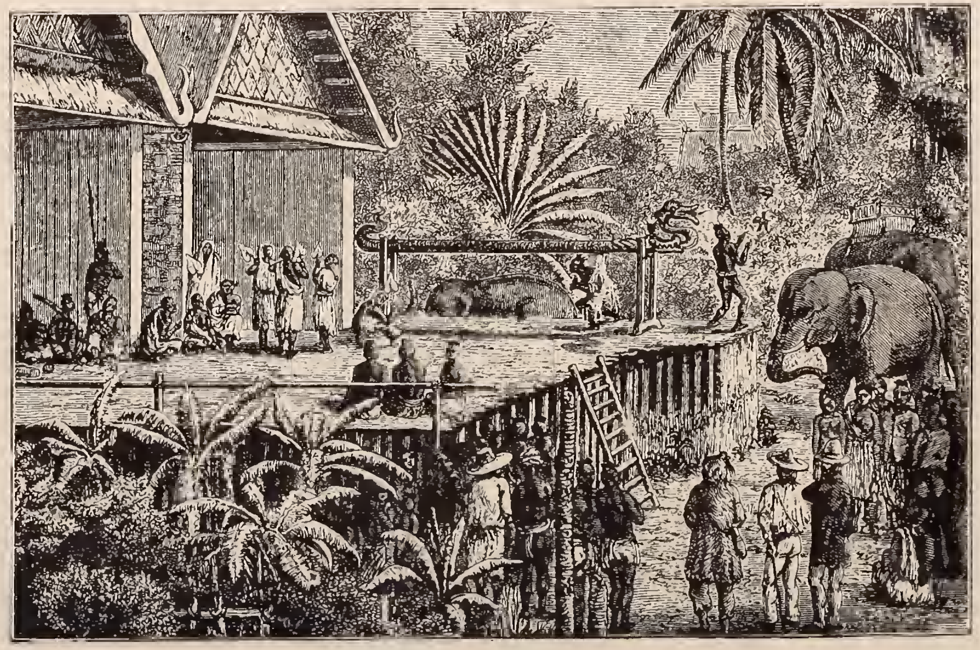
YOU will read in the following pages of a people about whom little is known and less published—a people possessing many qualities of remarkable attractiveness, and yet having not a few strange and semi-barbarous customs and beliefs; a people who seem in some respects to be peculiarly open to the influence of Christian teaching, and upon whose soil the Christian Church is rooted and growing; a people among whom the Lord assuredly has "chosen ones" who are hearing his voice one by one and answering to his call.

You will read of their land, their homes, their temples, their worship, their lives and occupations. And of all these you will be told by those who have lived among them, who have learned to know—yes, and to love them, seeing the precious souls within as the sculptor sees the beautiful statue within the rough block of marble.

CHARACTER AND GOVERNMENT.

Some few points are especially to be noticed as general characteristics of the Laos. They are a kind, affectionate people, caring much for their family-life and morally superior to the races around them. By some they are supposed to be the original stock from which came the present Siamese race, but they have mingled their blood with so many tribes, and their country is divided into so many small kingdoms or provinces, that it is difficult to find any marked traces of a distinct nationality among them.

There are six Laos states directly tributary to Siam—viz. Lakon, Lampoon, Cheung Mai, Muang Nan, Hluang Prabang and Muang Prai. All are independent of each other, but there are smaller provinces tributary to these larger states, yet the rulers even of the minor provinces are autocratic in rule within their own territories. Each of the six larger states has a first and second chief, the offices being filled by appointment of the king of Siam, to whom there is a right of appeal on the part of the people, who send notice to Bangkok on the decease of a chief, with a private intimation of their views as to a successor. Tribute is paid triennially to Siam in the form of gold and silver boxes, vases and jeweled neck-



CORONATION OF A LAOS KING.

laces, together with curious gold and silver trees valued at from 15*l.* to 135*l.* each.

The rulers of these provinces are called *khiao*, and they are invested with their office by the use of a gold dish, betel-box, spittoon and teapot, all of which are sent from Bangkok for the occasion, and returned thither when they die or are deposed from the throne.

The picture on the opposite page represents the coronation of the *khiao* of one of the most important of the Laos provinces in the East. The ceremony is thus described:

"On the morning of the appointed day there was an uproar of drums and gongs and other unmusical instruments. The noisy orchestra surrounded the palace, while the royal procession wound through the streets and defiled into the square or market-place. Mounted upon an elephant of great size, which was armed with a pair of formidable tusks, the king made his appearance, encircled by guards on foot and on horseback and attended by his great dignitaries mounted like himself. A train of smaller elephants followed carrying the court ladies. The cortège finally directed its course to some spacious pavilions erected for the purpose, where the bonzes of the royal pagoda were offering up their prayers. A few minutes passed, and another tableau was presented. The king was seen enthroned in the largest pavilion. He arose, and, escorted by his principal officers, advanced into the middle of a wide platform, where the bonzes, still uttering their prayers, gathered about him. He threw off his clothes, replacing them by a mantle of white cloth. Then the bonzes drew apart, so as to open up a passage for him, and he proceeded to place himself, with his body bent into a curve, immediately underneath the sacred dragon. Prayers were recommenced, and the king received the anointing or consecrating *douche*, while a dignitary who stood at one corner of the dais set free a couple of turtle-doves as a sign that all creation, down even to the animals, should be happy on so auspicious a day. When the water which was contained in the dragon's body had completely douched the royal person, new garments were brought, over which was thrown a large white robe, and he returned to his place in the centre of the hall. A grand banquet of rice and cucumbers and eggs and pork and delicious bananas, washed down by copious draughts of rice-wine, concluded the day's proceedings, and in the evening the town was lighted up with fireworks, while bands of singers and musicians traversed the streets."

The whole country belongs nominally to these chiefs, who grant certain districts to the numerous princes and nobles. These tax the common people heavily — one bucket of rice for every bucket planted — and there are also taxes on pork, fish, betel-nuts, bamboo and—gambling! The chiefs appoint an officer to gather the taxes in each hamlet, and by fair means or foul the uttermost farthing is squeezed out of the poorer classes.

The greatest reverence is paid to these princes and officials by the people, who never venture to name them without their titles in conversation, and when in the presence of a superior show their humility by crouching before them. A noble or wealthy Laos gentleman or lady never makes a call, or goes out for even a short walk, without a full retinue of attendants and slaves bearing the betel-box, umbrella, water-jar, sword, seal and other signs of wealth and rank.

Besides captives taken in war and their descendants, there are great numbers of slave-debtors, under obligation to serve their creditor until they can repay the debt incurred, capital and interest. These are usually well treated, and can recover freedom at any time if the debt is discharged by themselves or a friend.

Religious Belief and Customs.

While the Laos people are Buddhists, devout and faithful to all the requirements of that system, they are also true worshipers of nature, believing in spirits of earth, air and water, making frequent offerings to these and having some beautiful customs of worship connected with them. It would seem as if this phase of their religious life grew out of a sort of longing in their affectionate hearts for something less cold and distant—something closer and more accessible to them—than Buddhist teachings could give, and that, moved by this craving, they have turned to the spirit-world with its unseen but possibly near ministrations.

A few of their religious customs are interesting, and remarkable enough to deserve here some special mention. Dr. McGilvary gives the following account of one of their ceremonies:

"The full moon of the fourth Laos month, which usually occurs in January, witnesses a strange Laos custom. It is called by two names, signifying 'The Warming of Buddh' and the 'Offering of New Kow Lam' to the priests. About daylight on the morning of the full moon bonfires are kindled in the temple-grounds, at which are assembled a larger number than usual of worshipers. It is the cool season of the year, when the mornings are uncomfortably cold, but no one dares to warm himself by the bonfires on that morning. They are sacred to Buddh, and are kindled for his special benefit, and he, too, is presumed to be cold. When the fires are lighted, incense-tapers are taken by the priests, who go inside of the temple and prostrate themselves before the idols, and invite *them* to come out and be warmed by the sacred fires. It is a sham invitation, however, as they are not carried out, and they cannot of course come out themselves.

"It shows the inconsistent, incoherent and contradictory notions that a false religion fosters. If Buddh is a god, why should he be cold at all? Or if cold, why can't he warm himself? Or why cold on that morning? Or does the heat of the little bonfires continue during the whole cool season? And how does it consist with Buddh's annihilation? According to theory, he has attained Nipan, a state of utter unconsciousness of either happiness or misery. How, then, can he feel the sensation of cold? Or if he does, and can't warm himself, how can he be a refuge to others?

"We presume that the real explanation of the custom, however, may be sought from the second name mentioned above, and that the important part of the ceremony is the Kow Lam that follows. That is glutinous rice, on which the Laos principally live, put in joints of the bamboo and roasted over a fire till it is done. It is very palatable, and on this morning must always be made of the first-fruits of the new rice-crop. They feast on it then for a number of days. Every religious ceremony has its appropriate offerings to the priests, and this one, like the others, fills *them* with good things, and it matters but little then whether Buddh remains cold or becomes hot."

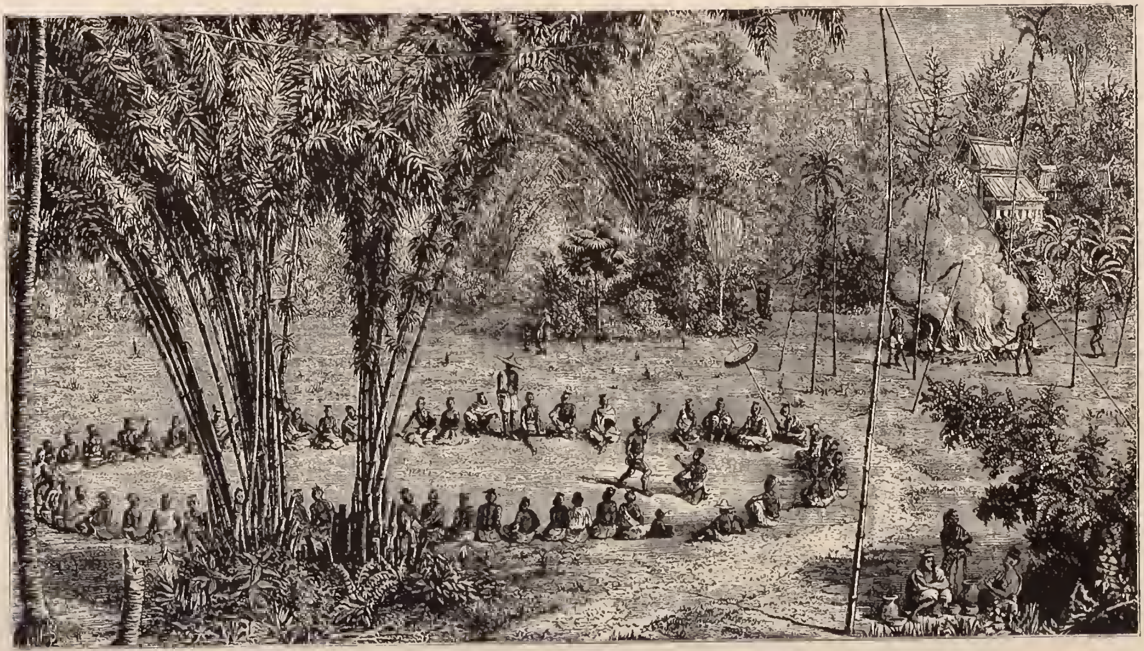
The Rev. J. Wilson thus tells of an appeal to the gods in time of drought:

"Many of the people are almost in a panic from the scarcity of rice. A year ago there was very little rain in the first part of the season, but the latter rain was so abundant as to overflow the fields to such a depth as to drown the rice. Consequently, the main crop of the year proved an entire failure. Rice has been and is now very dear, so that many of the poor have great difficulty in obtaining a sufficiency to support life. From the king down to the owner of the smallest patch of ground, all have been earnestly engaged in trying to call down the rain. The king, with his retinue of princes and servants, has ascended the mountain that lies some three miles west of the city to drench with water the pagoda and the principal idols of a temple that stands upon one of the mountain's peaks. Only a few days ago a procession of one hundred priests climbed the mountain for a similar service. The temples of Buddh, especially on the sacred days, are vocal with the sound of drums and the incantations of the worshipers who have brought their offerings to the idols to buy rain with merit. The execution of some convicts was hastened as a propitiatory sacrifice to the rain-producing powers."

At another time, when the season had been favorable, the thanksgiving is described by the same hand, as follows:

"The rice-crop this year is a bountiful one, and the people are rejoicing over it. The second king came in from the country on Sabbath morning. He had been out in his fields threshing his rice. Returning, he arranged for the yearly procession that is made at the close of the harvest. The first gong had rung for our religious service just as the procession reached the lower compound. The noise of bells on the elephants and the chanting of the riders, together with the music made by the king's band, made it necessary for us to delay the ringing of the second gong until after the procession had passed. I had not supposed it was to be so great an affair. A large number of elephants had passed before I began to count, but I counted one hundred and ten as they passed along one by one. I was told there were one hundred and seventy in the procession. One of the largest wore trappings of the brightest silver. The howdahs contained rice. All these were decorated with green branches. The procession was in honor of the guardian spirits that preside over the rice-crop. Those that could see the procession in its whole length considered it the most imposing one that has passed for years.

"About six weeks—including parts of March



A LAOS FUNERAL.

and April—are annually given up almost wholly to idolatrous worship, much of which consists in efforts to propitiate spirits. The spirit of the river upon which most of their commerce is carried on is propitiated by a floral offering. Tiny boats are filled with the choicest flowers, carried to the river's edge, and tapers arranged by which to illuminate the little barks. At a certain hour after dark a signal is given, and simultaneously thousands of these little boats are launched and go sailing down the stream. Aside from its being an act of idolatry, it is a most brilliant and beautiful sight and one that excites our highest admiration."

In Laos, when a person dies, a precious stone or coin is sometimes placed in the mouth of the corpse to pay the spirit-fine into the next world. Afterward the body is cremated with ceremonies similar to those of Siam. Men are laid with faces downward, and women on their backs, for cremation. When a chief dies, men are hired to engage in a pugilistic encounter in honor of the event.

MERIT-MAKING.

It has been frequently stated in the last few years that no *new* temples are built in heathen lands, the old crumbling ones being merely patched up for temporary use, if not allowed to fall into absolute ruin. But the testimony of missionaries, who see much more of these things than do passing travelers, does not bear out this statement. As evidence of the zeal and activity with which an old temple is sometimes restored and a new one planned when merit is to be made thereby, the following is given:

"The princes and people of Cheung Mai are all astir in the work of merit-making. Just now it takes the form of rebuilding the finest temple that was erected in Cheung Mai, and in gathering and shaping materials for the replacing, three or four months hence, of the temple on the top of the mountain with a new structure. All the sawyers of the city are on duty. Priests and people are busy with saw and chisel and adze and plane. The large public courtyard is full of timber and workmen. A new king has come upon the throne, and the way to a long and successful reign must be sought in the building of these new memorials to Buddha. How strange and how sad it all seems! But the *people* are not sad. For while their hands are busy their tongues are busy too, and the frequent merry laugh tells of the joyous heart. They boast themselves in their work. The chief priests of the temples are there—one time passing among the workmen giving directions, then seated in groups upon their mats, spread sometimes in the large *sala*, and sometimes on the green sward, under the shelter of the bamboo matting and the leaf-awnings that have been stretched above the workmen. They are treated by all with the greatest reverence. The day is theirs, for in every honor shown to Buddha they have a share. Every day does the king come from his palace to inspect the work and to testify his interest in it. His highest noblemen, and even princes, consider it a privilege and an honor to help to frame the timbers for these temples. And so the work goes on, and Buddha is remembered.

"Yesterday I passed through the temple that is so soon to be refitted. The walls of the old building had been taken down and removed. The foundation of the floor still remained. The principal idols were occupying their old places. The smaller ones were sitting in groups under the shade of the trees. The larger ones cannot be removed, but have been covered with split bamboo to prevent injury while the building is going up. The smaller ones are waiting patiently until the temple is completed and they are carried back to their places.

"The building just removed was put up nearly a hundred years ago, and with occasional patching has lasted until now. And what will be the history of the new one? Will Buddhists worship their idols there a hundred years to come? Will the darkness abide so long in the Laos land? Or shall it have crumbled into ruins and temples for the worship of the living God have risen up around it?"

Another of their innumerable ways of making merit is mentioned by Dr. McGilvary:

"We visited a great cave at Cheung Dow that forms the subject of one of their sacred books. It had never been examined beyond a certain stream of water believed to be impassable. But if any one had merit enough to cross, there would be found an idol ten feet high of solid gold with golden vestments in which to visit the city of the Yaks, which was still farther in. There, too, was the seat of Chow Kam Daang, one of their greatest spirits. As it was not so convenient for me to cross the water—which was not a deep stream, however—I had Nan Intah cross it, and still another little pond of water, with no signs, of course, of the golden idol or the city of Yak, which was our main object in visiting the cave. The cave is nevertheless a fine one, and in itself worthy of a visit."

LANGUAGE.

Although the Laos understand the Siamese spoken languages, and many of them can read the written characters also, the mass of the people are unable to do the latter. Hence it is a matter of great interest and importance to give them the Bible and other books in the Laos tongue. Funds were collected in America some years ago, by the

Women's Foreign Missionary Society of the Presbyterian Church, for the purpose of making the type and having the Laos Bible printed. There has been delay in the full accomplishment of this object, owing to the absence from the country of some of the few missionaries who could superintend it, and because also of some unexpected difficulties in the way; but it is believed now that the work will very soon be done, and the people be supplied with the Bible in their own tongue. They are themselves eager to read and quick to learn.

Cheung Mai.

The Laos capital is a walled city a mile square and surrounded by a moat, situated on the Maping River, one of the chief branches of the Menam. Little hamlets of bamboo houses usually make up the towns of the Laos country, but Cheung Mai has a brick wall around it, and is much more of a city in size and appearance. The following description of the view from the mission-house near by will give an idea of the city and surrounding objects:

"From the veranda or through the open door we can see the stream gliding by in graceful silence, the native boats passing up and down; the farther bank with its smiling groves and houses half hidden between; farther out, on the plain, a widespreading forest of palm and other trees, whose towering tops tell us the site and limits of Cheung Mai surrounded by its high and massive wall of brick. Beyond and over the top of this city arose that grand old mountain, Doi Su Tape, ever beautiful, ever changing in its beauty.

"Were I an expert at the pencil, I might send you some time a landscape of river, plain and mountain superior to many that are esteemed by the true artist as gems of the beautiful and picturesque. It is our privilege to look upon this landscape of varied beauty every day. For a week or more we were shut in, native style, at every point of the compass by a luxuriant growth of tamarind, bamboo, and garden shrubbery. It is thus that the native houses, which generally stand back a distance from the river-pathway, are sometimes entirely concealed by the dark-green foliage of the gardens. In front of our premises a number of tamarind trees stand in all the carelessness of the primeval forest. Some of them clutch the bank with their great roots, a part of which have been washed bare by the stream when at its height. Their wide-spread branches intercepted our view of the river and mountain and kept out the cooling breeze. But the axe, by lopping and pruning, soon gave scope to the eye and ingress to the healing wind."

This principal mission-station is on the right bank of the river. On the left bank, near the bridge, is Dr. Cheek's compound, on the city side

—the gift of the chief of Cheung Mai to the missionary-physician, who is consulted by the royal family in sickness.

Through the gate that leads from the public road to Dr. Cheek's dispensary a steady stream of Laos men, women and children, rich and poor, passes to and fro. "His name is a synonym," says a traveler* who recently visited Cheung Mai, "of all that is good and kind throughout the district, he having relieved the sufferings and saved the lives of hundreds of natives, and thereby earned their warm gratitude. Adjoining his house he has erected a long bamboo shed, subdivided into a number of small apartments, which serve as the wards of a hospital. Here he has performed hundreds of operations with such skill and such success that even the superstitious Laotians come from long distances to be cured by him when suffering from painful diseases or severe wounds. The chiefs and princes often send for him when their reliance upon the superstitious rites of the native 'faculty' begins to fail them, though, in such cases, his advice has often been only asked when the patients have been *in extremis.* Two or three years ago he saved the life of the chief's wife when all the drugs and incantations of several native medicos had been called into requisition in vain.

"Dr. Cheek has also established a boat-building yard, where he gives employment to a large number of men, and where he has introduced improved models of boats and better modes of construction. American tools have been introduced, and are gradually superseding the primitive adzes and saws of the natives."

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* Carl Bock.

The same traveler describes the palace of the chief of Cheung Mai as "a mixture of Chinese and Laos architecture. Along the whole front extended a long, open room, partially furnished with European furniture, the only article of native workmanship a large gilt state-chair or throne reserved for the use of the head-priest when he came to visit the chief."

The palace itself and the court-life within are characterized by great simplicity, the king, "an old man, tall of stature, but slightly stooping beneath his load of sixty-four years," usually spending much of his time in mechanical work, of which he is fond, and the queen sharing with him in the transaction of state business. The present queen is a woman of remarkable intelligence, and exercises a predominant influence in the government, "by virtue," says a missionary, "of her exceptional feminine tact."

Cheung Mai has a large market, which is very neat and orderly. It is kept by women, who seat themselves on the ground, with vegetables, fruits and confectionery deposited on plantain-leaves or in little baskets made by themselves. While not trading they work on embroidery used in ornamentation. Formerly, salt was the market currency, and so seldom was money used that the owners of the articles often did not know the value of them in money, but could readily tell if asked how much salt they would take. The occasion of this was that all their salt came from a great distance and was very precious in Cheung Mai. Within a few years the Siamese government has sent small coin to take the place of salt as a currency. The people were much confused for a while by the change, and circulated them reluctantly. Some were even imprisoned for persisting in taking salt to market to make their purchases.

The principal articles for sale are provisions, fruits, tobacco, betel-nut, fish, mushrooms, wax, cotton, earthenware and flowers. The pork-stalls are kept by men, and there are some Chinese sheds where cotton goods, brass and wooden trays and Burmese lacquer-ware are sold. There are a large number of temples in the city, among others the new Wat Hluang, or royal temple, recently built on the site of a very old one.

Homes and Daily Life.

There are no fine houses or palaces for the most part in Laos, princes and peasants building on much the same general plan; the size and quality of material and workmanship are the main difference. The thatched roofs are cheap and easily replaced, and those of teak tiles, though more durable, afford no better protection from sun and rain. One-story high and raised on posts from six to eight feet above the ground, a short flight of rude steps leads to the balcony which runs around the dwelling. The flooring is usually of bamboo or teak, and on one side of the veranda, protected by a covered shed, stand the large water-jars, with a cocoanut dipper near. This entrance-platform is generally ornamented by pots of orchids and other flowering plants. Here in dirty weather, before entering the house, the polite guest pauses to pour water over his feet. Here too the princes and other inmates, too indolent to walk down to the river, are accustomed to take a morning and evening bath by pouring water over themselves with the dipper.

Underneath the dwellings is a general receptacle for howdahs, gardening utensils, etc., which at night is often used as a cattle-shed.

The furniture is very simple. Mats and cushions are piled in a corner ready for use, the best cushions being three-sided with embroidered ends. Home-made mattresses stuffed with cotton; mosquito curtains; generally a native cradle swinging from the beam overhead; a few pots, pans, baskets, cocoanut-shell dippers and spoons; a flat vessel or saucer for the porkfat or oil which, with a bit of cotton wick, furnishes the only artificial light,—would probably nearly exhaust the list. At meal-times, about seven in the morning and toward sunset, the family-circle gathers around a lacquer or brass tray on which are placed small bowls of fish or pork, bamboo-shoots, vegetables and curry, the steamed rice being served separately to each person in a small basket. They sit upon the floor or mats; plates, forks and knives are for the most part unknown. Among the very poor the plantain-leaf takes even the place of bowls and saves all dish-washing.

Every house has its native loom, and the garments are for the most part homespun. Cotton is very plentiful and cheap in Laos, and native dyes are used. The women, rich and poor alike, spend much time in making garments for the priests. Some of the well-to-do and the slaves of the nobility are skilled in embroidery. The native silk fabrics are also woven on the loom, cocoons of the wild silkworm being collected. The favorite colors are dark-blue, orange, maroon and a reddish-brown. Princesses use this silk interwoven with gold thread.

Each district seems to have its own local head-covering, the most common being a large flat of palm-leaves sewn together. A straight, scant, horizontally-striped petticoat in blue and yellow, with a body-scarf or shawl worn in various ways, or a tight-fitting jacket, constitutes the not ungraceful costume of a Laos woman; her hair, being drawn back, is fastened in a neat knot by a gold pin and is almost invariably ornamented with flowers.

The body of the men of Western Laos is usually covered with tattoo-marks of different animals and emblematic monsters. These figures are usually first sketched by the professional tattooer from the waist to the knees—monkeys, bats, rats, birds and so-forth; then the skin is punctured with a sharp-pointed steel instrument, and an indelible black pigment is well rubbed in. The dress of the ordinary man consists of little more than the waist-cloth, but the young noblemen are adopting the Siamese court-costume. Formerly, all went bare-footed, but buffalo-hide sandals are now much used. Both men and women are passionately fond of flowers. The ear-lobes are bored when very young and stretched with pieces of wood, ivory and metal, and the men almost invariably carry a flower in this hole; cigars and other articles are fastened behind the ear. Large ears are regarded with favor as a sign of longevity.

Laos Workmanship.

Scattered over Laos-land are brick-fields and pottery-works, where the native earthenware, water-jars and other household utensils are made. The earthenware oven used by the Laos is in the shape of a boot, the opening at the top holding the pot, while the upper part of the shoe is cut away for the grate. Wood is burned within. These ovens are very cheap, but break easily.

Wood-carving is also much practiced in Laos, and much technical artistic skill is displayed in the carved scroll-work for doors, posts and household utensils.

The valuable native varnish called *rack* is resin collected from the trunk of a special tree in Laos. This black lacquer is a monopoly and little exported, being used in preparing the temples and idols for their covering of paint and gold-leaf. It dries slowly in spite of the hot climate, but gives in the end a perfectly smooth, hard surface unaffected by dampness. The manufacture of lacquer-ware is carried on in all parts of the country. First-class workers are found in almost every hamlet. The foundation is made of woven bamboo strips coated thickly with *rack*. This is polished with the common Laos substitute for sand-paper—rice-husks and water. Then a pattern is drawn with a style and the article finished with coats of red and brown paint. Many household utensils are lacquer-ware, and some of the designs are really well executed. The price varies with the quality of the workmanship.

The Laos are also skilled in the manufacture of silver-ware. Each village has usually one or more native artists engaged in executing orders for the princes and wealthy classes. The *modus operandi* is primitive, and the work lacks finish, but the general effect is bold and pleasing. A thin plate of the right shape is filled with a composition of wax and resin. The patterns are from memory, usually a medley of mythical birds and beasts, and the design is hammered out with a style and sort of blunt chisel, the plastic filling yielding readily to each blow; the figures and scroll-work stand out in high relief. The value of articles is determined by the weight, with fifty per cent. added for labor.

OCCUPATIONS.

Life in Laos is exceedingly monotonous. The women do much of the hard work in the field as well as in the household. During the dry, cool season, from November to May, even the trees and grass seem dried up and lifeless, only the orchids showing any signs of vitality. Heavy thunder- and hail-storms in May often herald the opening of the rainy season. Then all nature takes a fresh start: the rice is planted; new leaves shoot out; the heat becomes intense; vegetation is almost spontaneous. After planting, only a very little labor is needed to secure a good harvest in a favorable season. Both buffaloes and oxen are used for ploughing, and are guided by reins attached to the noses of the animals. Elephants abound, and are also employed as beasts of burden, especially in the wood-yards. Carts are few, and the rude native ones sometimes used to transport rice are drawn by men. The paddy-granaries are simple, huge barrel-shaped bamboo baskets, plastered to keep out mice and insects.

There are few amusements. Men, women and children are adepts in fishing, and thus provide food for the household. The chase is sport little indulged in by the lower classes, with the exception of professional tiger-hunters. Two or three times a year grand hunting-expeditions are organized by the principal chiefs and cause much excitement.

The habits of social and domestic life among the Laos present some striking contrasts to those of most heathen nations. Women are kindly treated, and even honored by special favor and consideration in cases of litigation with men. The baby-daughter is cared for as tenderly as the little son, and child-marriage is unknown, while old age is respected and watched over. Marriage is not as much a matter of trade as it usually is among heathen people, and divorce is less common and more governed by just and humane laws. Their treatment of the sick is absurd in the extreme, so far as true care and healing are concerned (as will appear in the chapter on that subject), but their intention seems to be to do for their suffering ones all that their limited knowledge and superstitious beliefs allow.

Traveling.

The great need of Laos is a better outlet for trade. At present these little kingdoms are practically shut in from the outside nations. There are parts of this country which can only be reached by elephant-traveling, so dense are the jungles and so difficult the passage. Missionaries laboring here are more isolated from the rest of the world than at most stations, as will appear from the following statements: There is no established line of boats going and coming, as upon our own waters, but all transporting is done by private individuals, and is only an occasional or incidental occurrence. For this reason our inland missionaries have to wait sometimes from three to five months before receiving any mail-matter from Bangkok, and in one instance Cheung Mai had no mail for eight months. At Rahang gentlemen may leave the river and complete the journey to Cheung Mai by elephant, but ladies could not endure the ride, it is such a very tiresome mode of travel. The elephant is a faithful and indispensable servant in that land of mountains. All overland transportation throughout Laos is carried on by means of elephants and oxen. Large droves of oxen are frequently seen traveling single file behind a leader decked with a mask fancifully made out of shells covering his whole face, while from between his horns a large peacock tail rises and sweeps gracefully, though comically, over his back. Each ox is laden with an immense pair of baskets thrown over saddle-bag fashion, and in these are placed the articles for transportation. Sometimes every ox is covered nearly all over with strings of little bells, which add some life to the scene. The peddlers from the north do a large trade with Siam and Laos, and the Shan caravans are almost entirely composed of these oxen, which give warning of their approach by a musical sound of tinkling bells echoing through the forest glades and from the steep mountain-sides. The object of the mask upon the leader is to protect the caravan from the assaults of evil spirits. The Yunnan caravans are composed of small ponies and mules. To prevent delay from grazing along the road, a ratan muzzle is provided. Elephants also are decorated with bells to give notice of their approach to caravans coming from an opposite direction. As they tramp steadily along they regale themselves with the tender shoots of overhanging trees. When crossing a stream they generally take a trunkful of water whether thirsty or not.

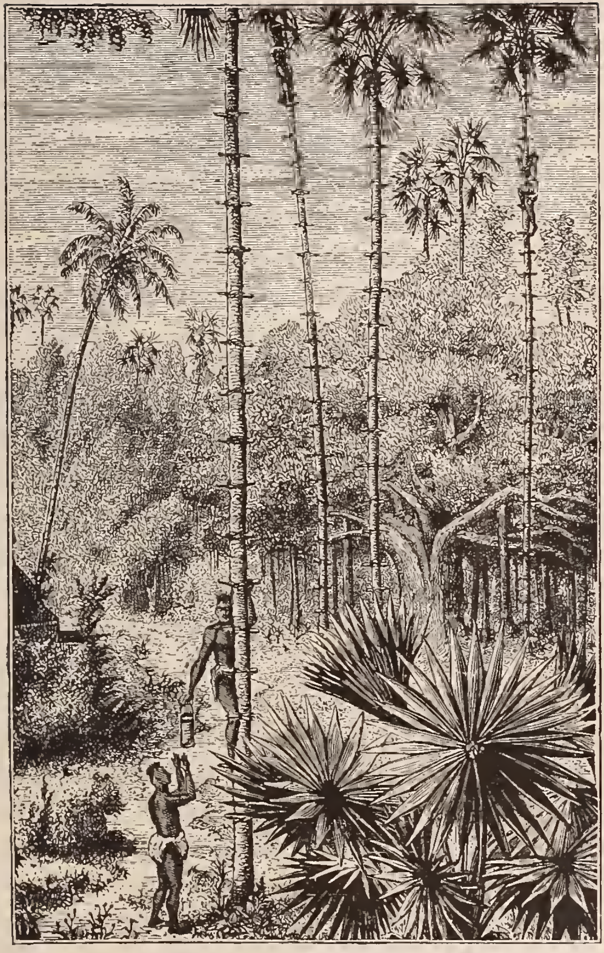
Official passports are curious documents, consisting of long narrow strips of palm-leaf coiled into a ring, and at each end is an embossed stamp. This stamp determines the real weight of the document, and is the first point examined before reading the order. These leaves are almost imperishable, being tough and entirely unaffected by water, and for such a purpose are superior to paper. When the writing grows indistinct it is easily made legible by wetting the finger and rubbing it over the leaf, thus cleansing the smooth surface and filling the scratches with a thin film of dirt. Such a passport frequently includes an order to inferior officials to furnish the traveler with the necessary elephants for his journey. Throughout Laos written official documents are almost invariably thus scratched with a style on a strip of palm-leaf.

The enormous number of wild elephants in the forests and domesticated elephants in the towns strikes one with amazement. Tigers, deer, wild hogs, pea-fowls and jungle-chickens also abound in the forests; while dogs, cats, crows and lizards are among the domesticated pets. The country is rich, not only in valuable timber, but in minerals. The opening up of the market by railroad would result in immediate profit, bringing down the Laos products and taking back in exchange English and American manufactures, for which a large and increasing demand would be readily created.

Laos Oil and Wine.

Cocoa and betel-nut trees abound in Cheung Mai. Oil is made from the former, and the latter produces an article of commerce.

Laotians have their wine as well as more civilized nations, but they get it from a tree instead of a vine. A party of friends who were traveling near Lakon in returning from a walk in the environs encountered some Laotians carrying vessels of bamboo filled with a liquid which at first they supposed to be water. On tasting it, however, they discovered that it was the wine of the country, sweet-flavored and by no means disagreeable to the palate—not unlike, indeed, the product of some of the Rhenish vineyards. It was palm wine, freshly made. It will not keep more than four-and-twenty hours without fermentation. The Laotians offered to conduct the strangers to a neighboring plantation, where they might observe the different processes of its manufacture. The offer was accepted, and the party soon arrived at a clearing which was thickly planted with great borassus palms. To collect the wine—which is, in fact, the sap of the tree—nothing more is necessary than to make an incision in the middle of the head of the tree at the point where the leaves branch off, and suspend beneath a bamboo, into which the sap falls drop by drop. In order to reach the summit of these



TAPPING THE BORASSUS PALM.

huge palms, which are straight and smooth as the mainmast of a ship, the Laotians have invented a simple and ingenious process. They transform the palm into a veritable ladder by attaching to the trunk, with small strips of flexible ratan, projecting laths of bamboo, which, jutting out to right and left at intervals of twelve to fourteen inches, form so many "rungs" and enable the ascent of the tree to be rapidly and easily accomplished.

INCIDENTS OF MISSION-LIFE.

There are bright gleams ever and anon revealing themselves in the pictures given us of the life of our missionaries in this lonely corner of the world, showing that God does not leave his servants here to sadness and discouragement. A young missionary thus describes a visit to the wife of the king of the province, by courtesy called a queen:

"I want to tell you of a novel entertainment Mrs. Cheek and myself enjoyed last week. The queen has long been wishing for a dress made like ours, and at last she prevailed on Mrs. Cheek to make it. The material was black summer silk, and Mrs. Cheek made a pretty, short *princesse*, white lace at neck and sleeves and lavender bows —very pretty indeed. While it was being made we laughed over visions of bare feet beneath a black silk awkwardly adjusted and a yellow cotton scarf. When the dress was finished Mrs. Cheek invited me to go with her to the queen's and try to persuade her to let us show her how to wear it. I was only too willing. The queen received us very kindly, and was delighted with the dress. Mrs. Cheek suggested that she put it on while we were there, and she laughed and said she was ashamed, but soon invited us into her bedroom to help her dress. Mrs. Cheek had provided the necessary underclothes, and after much instruction they were properly adjusted. How we were to get the dress over her sacred head was a question, but she answered it by putting it on herself. I buttoned it, pinned the neck, and put on her diamond pin and necklace, and then we stood off to get the effect. The transformation was as pleasing as it had been sudden, and we were delighted. The queen seemed to know that the dress was suitable, and instead of being awkward she was at perfect ease. Our fears were not at all realized; even the bare feet seemed dignified. The queen in the native costume looks tall and spare, but this costume rounded her form out and made her look quite queenly. When the king came in to see her he was very much pleased, and told her she must have another dress just like it. We had a very pleasant visit, and returned home well pleased. Mrs. Cheek is now suffering for her generosity, for Chow O'Boon has sent cloth to have dresses made for herself and daughter, and other princesses are wishing to have the whole costume."

Another enlivening incident is told in these words:

"I must tell you of the latest great excitement we have created. Many years ago our mission-compound was a temple-ground, but the temple was all in ruins when the mission took this land, and the débris was used for leveling the ground, and in this débris an old idol was buried. This has always been considered a very sacred spot, and many people have brought offerings of fruit and flowers to be placed near the spot where the idol was supposed to be. We have always refused them admission to our grounds, but they often come at night unknown to us and bring their offerings. Last week we were having our bank of the river diked, and the workmen found the idol. Mr. Wilson had them disinter it. As soon as the people heard what was done they came in great numbers to see the god they had been so long worshiping—an image of Buddha, of sandstone, about five feet high, sitting in Oriental fashion on a large stone pillar. It had doubtless once been gilded, but not a ray of glory remained, and it was both headless and crippled in one arm. The next day Mr. Wilson took an axe and demolished the god. Then you should have seen the people, and especially the children, come and peep through the fence, and, half frightened at the sacrilegious deed that was being done, hurry away again. We intend to utilize this old relic by making a garden-seat of the pedestal and a mound for ferns of the broken pieces.

Another lady describes a picnic given to some newly-arrived missionaries by a Cheung Mai princess:

"At four A. M. my clock struck the alarm, and we opened our eyes to find it still dark. It did not take us long to dress. Lighting the oil-stove, we soon had boiling water, and coffee, which, with mango sauce and bread and butter, gave us a light breakfast before the long trip began. Just before six I ran down to the gate and saw the four elephants crossing the river; to my astonishment, the young prince, Chow Kope, was driving one of them. Like most boys, he thought it would be fun to throw aside the dignity of the princeship for a while. He is a bright, intelligent and winning boy. He drove his elephant up to the front veranda, raised the floor of the howdah (a little house placed on the back of the elephant, and in which we ride), stored our baskets, shawls, etc. in a sort of catch-all, and then, putting down the floor, spread my boat-mattress over it, and placed the pillows at one end that I might lie down if I wished to. Our drivers sit upon the heads of the elephants, climbing up by means of the chain which holds the howdah on, and using the knee of the fore leg of the elephant for a stirrup, or rather a step-up. The elephant, when punched on the knee, holds up his foot; the driver places *his* foot on the broad step made by the elephant's knee, and, catching hold of the chain, swings himself up to the monster's head, where he sits—monarch of all he surveys. Taking Chow's hand, I reached the elephant's head, and then perched myself, as comfortably as you can imagine, in my little house. Others of the party mounted elephants, and some rode on horseback.

"We started off, moving slowly but surely. Crossing at the elephant ford, we soon reached the road at the east gate of the city-wall; following the road till we reached the north-west gate, we struck out across the rice-fields—great plains, with only now and then a little cluster of trees. We could command a fine view of the plains, and the atmosphere was so clear that, for the first time, I saw the belt of mountains which encircles the valley wherein Cheung Mai is nestled. The mountain to which we were going seemed to be only about two miles away, but was in reality four miles. The rice-field road took us across some little brooks, which the elephants must have enjoyed, for they filled their trunks with water, and every few minutes amused us by throwing it over themselves, till one would almost have supposed that that long proboscis was an unfathomable reservoir. Before reaching the mountain proper we came into the woods, composed of bamboo and a multitude of other trees and shrubs of which I did not know the names, and a dense undergrowth. The path from this place up the mountain was narrow, rough and steep, but not once did the clumsy-looking creatures stumble. They frequently came to places so steep that it seemed as though it were folly to attempt to climb up, but up they went, carefully, slowly, placing the knees of their fore legs on the high step, then drawing up the other feet, never missing their footing. At the foot of the mountain we saw the stream Hoa Kao, which we followed in the already beaten pathway. Up, up we went, over rocks and shrubs, and so close to the edge of precipices from one hundred to one hundred and fifty feet high that it seemed as if we must fall over. Oh, it was grand! At one place on the mountain-side we had a very fine view of the country for miles.

"You may wonder how the drivers guide the elephants. A knock on the right side of the head means turn to the left, a knock on the left means go to the right, one on the forehead means go slowly. They use, in thus guiding these beasts, a bamboo stick two feet long with a prong on the end of it. It did seem wonderful that they were so easily managed. When we came to a steep place Chow would say '*Coy*' (carefully).

"At last, after a two hours' ride, we saw the princess Chow O'Boon, with her train of servants, waiting for us on a large flat rock by the stream. With their many-colored skirts and scarfs, dark skins, black hair and shining eyes they looked like a band of gypsies. Here my elephant carefully knelt down, and, stepping on to its head, a man helped me, and once more I was on *terra firma.* This spot was as far as the elephants could go, but Chow's slaves picked up our luggage, and we walked to where the stream was quite narrow. By its banks were great flat rocks, and projecting over these and at a height of thirty feet was a very large umbrella-like rock. It must have projected twenty-five feet, and was about seventy feet long. Under its shelter we had our dinner, and after this a nice resting-time. Having brought our bathing-suits, we went up the stream later in the day and had a delightful bath. At four o'clock we started for home. The ride back was delightful, though it was quite exciting coming down the mountain. The sky was beautiful: low in the horizon were dark clouds threatening rain; above them the lighter clouds changed from golden to scarlet, then gradually back to golden. A pleasant breeze was blowing, and had not the fact that I was riding an elephant kept me awake I should have gone to sleep. We reached home about seven o'clock, and all pronounced Hoa Kao a beautiful stream. We felt very grateful to Chow O'Boon for giving us the use of her elephants and thus affording us so much pleasure."

But better perhaps than all else of reward or comfort in a missionary's experience are the consistent life and triumphant death of one rescued from the darkness and superstition of his people and brought into the kingdom of God. The man mentioned in the following account, the first Laos convert, had for a number of years been walking with God in humble faith:

"Dear old Nan Intah is at rest—gone to be with Jesus whom he loved. I wish that many of those who talk so much about the failure of mission-work could have been at his bedside and seen his resigned and peaceful death.

"When told that he could not live through the day, he turned to his eldest child and committed the mother to his care. He gave his hand to each of us first, then to his dear faithful wife and children and grandchildren, and last to the church-members, saying to them, 'Be patient! be patient! trust in Jesus, all of you.' To his youngest son he said, 'I am walking on the way you all must go; only be ready for our Lord. Oh, my son, do not fall from the right path. Trust in the Lord now, and do his work, as I have tried to do. You will suffer many trials, but they will be forgotten when the day of reward comes. You plant the rice-fields in the water and in the rain, but three months from now you will gather the harvest. Learn from your yearly work the lesson of life, and strengthen yourself in Jesus.' He suffered greatly, but toward the last he lay quietly as if sleeping, then suddenly opened his eyes and looked at me as if he would speak, but he was not looking at me, for his eyes were full of light and joy. A smile passed over his face, and at the same instant he breathed his last.

"The children were violent in their grief, but the dear old wife and mother would say, 'Let us rejoice rather that father is now free from suffering. Jesus saved him from sin, and now has only taken him to himself. God has called him home before us, but we may follow and be with him. Be patient and trust, as your father said.' She was heartbroken herself, and nearly exhausted with the long, patient nursing, and yet she would only say, 'Loong Nan never complained in all his two years' sickness. Let us not complain of what the Lord has done.'

"The men made a teak-wood coffin and Mr. Wilson lined it with fresh white muslin; then the body of our beloved old elder, the first Laos convert, was put in it and carried to the worship-room, where his voice had often been heard in prayer. The whole land was so flooded that it was impossible to dig a grave, so the coffin was placed on the surface of the ground and a brick wall built around it. This could not be done in the public burying-ground, and we laid our dear old Loong Nan in our own garden under the mango trees. Every one said, 'How different from a heathen burial!'

"Do I believe that Jesus is? Yes, as I believe that I live now. Nan Intah, a poor ignorant Laos, in this remotest corner of the globe, believed the precious story of our Lord and received the promise, 'I will not fail thee nor forsake thee.' 'I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.' That bright look of surprised joy,—I thank our Lord for permitting me to see it, and it has strengthened my faith in him."

With this story of the peaceful death and Christian burial of a man but a little time ago a believer in witchcraft, a worshiper of spirits and of Buddha, knowing nothing of God or Christ or his own soul, we leave the general subject to look more particularly at the Laos country and people.

CHAPTER XXIII.

FROM BANGKOK TO CHEUNG MAI.

AS the newly-arrived missionary for Laos stands in Bangkok and looks "up the river," the five hundred miles that lie between him and Cheung Mai mean more to him perhaps than any of the same number he has traversed since leaving his native land. It means from sixty to ninety days' travel in a rocking boat, and when accomplished puts him in one of the most isolated outposts of the Church.

The boats for the journey, with a Laos crew are sent down from Cheung Mai, as they are constructed to meet the peculiarities of the upper Menam, its changing channels, its shallows and its rapids. The hull is of light draught, and in the larger boats is about thirty feet long and widens to the breadth of six or seven feet across the deck. At either end it rises from the water in a sharp, narrow curve, that of the stern being broadened and finished with an ornamentation which resembles a fish's tail. This is the design, and poetical it may be, but in appearance it is clumsy and unsymmetrical in the general contour of the boat. The cabin at the stern, in dimensions about five by seven feet, is used as a sitting- and sleeping-room. The middle deck is appropriated to the storing away of goods, boxes, trunks, etc., and the bow is occupied by the boatmen, where they sit when rowing or walk when poling, and where they eat and sleep. The middle deck is covered over with bamboo wickerwork. It forms an arch, and is so low that one cannot stand up in it. The roof of the cabin is of the same material, but of finer braid, is separate from that of the middle deck, and about two feet higher, so that one can stand comfortably in the centre of it. The bow has an adjustable cover, which the boatmen slide on to the cover of the middle deck during the day and replace over the bow at night. The three sides of the cabin toward the river have the upper parts entirely open. Screens of bamboo matwork are fastened on the outside by strings of ratan, which answer the purpose of hinges. These "shutters" can be raised to any angle, and are propped outward by slender bamboo sticks. Being tied to the screen, they are always at hand.

The crew consists of a captain and from six to eight boatmen. It is quite an imposing sight when the Laos king starts out with a fleet of forty or fifty of these boats, each taking place in line according to the rank of the passengers, the king's boat at the head with the Siamese flag aloft, and gongs sounding the departure.

Our missionary fleet seldom exceeds three boats, and is minus the flags and gongs, but instead has the waving of hats and handkerchiefs by the outward bound, which is answered by the watchers on the banks. "Bon voyage!" and "God speed you!" mingle with the farewells of the company on the receding boats until each is lost to the other's sight.

Let us suppose that you and I are of a company awaiting in Bangkok the coming of the Laos boats. For many days we have been making provision for our journey as well as enjoying the society of dear friends, when at last one evening the announcement is made, "The boats are here!" With one accord we rush to the river-bank in time to see them filing into place for mooring in front of the missionary compound. How topheavy they look, reminding us of old-fashioned stage-coaches! The dusky boatmen look at us with smiling faces as we greet them with "*Subirú?*" ("Are you well?"), and respond with a hearty "*Subi? subi?*" ("Well? well?"), returning the question to us. We next ask, "How many days since you left Cheung Mai?" Ten days, or fifteen, or twenty may be the reply, for you must understand it is easier to get from Cheung Mai to Bangkok than from here to Cheung Mai. How is that? Well, their quick trip indicates a good stage of water, and they have been able to shoot the rapids and to row most of the way in the smoother waters. In going up the poling in the upper river is slow work, and the boats have to be dragged by ropes over the rapids, which consumes both time and strength, for the boatmen have to rest after passing the most difficult (*i. e.* high and swift). We must also take into consideration the difference of going with the current and against it.

By the time we have finished this little talk the boats have been tied to their moorings and the boatmen are sitting in squat-fashion on the decks, resting before their preparations for supper and for the night. As we bid them "Good-evening" our thoughts are busy with the morrow, when we shall begin to arrange our boats for the trip northward. At dawn we are awake, and find the atmosphere cool even to chilliness, as it always is in the winter months. The thermometer, we find, stands at 60° (at Cheung Mai at this season it is often as low as 54°). The cool season is best suited to traveling in boats, and it is important that we get off at its beginning. In the hot season, March and April, the journey will be intolerable, and the river being then very low, it would be impossible to get the larger boats through the shallow water. In the rainy season, from May till October, you can imagine what it would be to live in a close boat with a daily visitation of rain, besides the risk to health from constant dampness and exposure to malaria, which is rifest at that season. The best time for the journey is the cool season, when the skies are without a cloud—from the middle of November till February—and the air is cool and pure. The weather then is like October in our Middle States, warm throughout the day with cool nights and mornings. You will then need the blankets and quilts provided by the dear home friends, and your warm wraps and shawls will be in use most of the way.

As our goods and provisions are transferred to the boats, we proceed to their arrangement in the narrow spaces allotted. You will not think our appointments very luxurious, yet we can make our cabin neat and home-like by hanging curtains at the windows, and our mattresses, which are laid in a corner on the floor, we can fold together and cover with a chintz spread, thus economizing space and improvising a sofa. On the shelf above we shall place a few books, toilet articles and flowers and ferns as we can get them. A grass mat upon the floor and two or three camp-chairs, and the arrangements are complete, the goods in mid-deck being tidily and compactly settled, with trunks and boxes left accessible and all the articles for "below decks" being nicely stored.

The cheery "All ready!" is given, and we launch out into the river. The exit is very quiet. As our crafts are pulled out to mid-stream the splash of the long oars as they fall and rise is the only signal of our outgoing. We select the time of departure at "flood-tide," when the waters from the Gulf of Siam come up to start us on our way. But in a few hours we are beyond this tidal wave—yes, and far beyond the dear friends we left standing on the bank of the river. Bangkok is left in the distance, with its missionary homes and chapels, its palaces, huts and great temples, its shipping, steamers and market-boats, its bazaars and merchant-houses and its thronging, restless population.

The river at this stage of our journey is wide and even with its banks, while the heavy volume of water is rippling and turbid. As we pass the suburbs and get farther into the country the signs of human life begin to disappear. Mile after mile we pass between the low green banks in uninhabited seclusion and surrounded on all sides by luxuriant and gorgeous vegetation—forest trees and bushes of undergrowth in countless varieties, and conspicuous among them the bamboo, cocoanut and palm. Every bend brings a repetition of the same scene, without the sight of a house or road or farm, until we reach one of the many villages that are scattered at distances all the way to Rahang, our halfway station.

And now what of boat-life and our Laos crew? The captain, with the rudder-handle and his stool, occupies one entire side of our cabin. The tiller, entering aft of the cabin between the floor and wall, passes over its whole length to the fore side, where it reaches the hand of the pilot as he sits on a high stool. This arrangement trammels our movements on that side, as of necessity we must keep out of the way. The man himself, with the characteristics of his race, is polite, simple-hearted and unobtrusive. The men at the bow who, with strong arms are propelling the boat, soon win our esteem by their patient faithfulness. The happier it will be, however, if some of our native Christians are of the company. Yet even the untaught Laos have a kindness of nature and a desire to please and oblige which, with their quiet, gentle ways, gain our interest and respect. To find the noble qualities of friendliness, kindness and gratitude amongst a people so morally degraded may seem contradictory, but it remains a fact.

The leisure hours in the boat we occupy in the study of the language, Bible-reading, etc. As meal-time approaches we are on the lookout for a pleasant, shady stopping-place, and as soon as the boat reaches shore we are out, and at once begin culinary operations. The boatmen gather driftwood, which is abundant along the banks, and soon have two fires lighted. We detail one or two men to assist us, while the others prepare their own food, which has been selected and laid away, as ours has been, in Bangkok before starting. The Laos men are more or less accustomed to assist in cooking when at home, and this training is a great convenience to themselves and to us in this long river-journey.

If our methods of preparing a meal are different, a much sharper contrast is drawn as we sit down in two companies on the river-shore to eat our food. The Laos squat around their baskets of boiled or steamed rice and bowls of peppery curry made of chicken or fish. This, with bowls of vegetables and fruit lying around loose, is laid on the bare sand or deck as the case may be. No knives or forks are used, but we may see wooden spoons, with which they dip up the savory vegetable curry from the general dish, throwing back their heads as they put it into their mouths. In fact, they eat most of their food in this manner.

Supper is the only meal we can take leisurely, as we do not prepare it till landed for the night. At breakfast and dinner we consume but little over an hour in preparing and eating. By management we can have breakfast and dinner under preparation when the boat stops, so as to make as little delay as possible. All having eaten and the dishes being washed and laid away, we resume our course.

As we pass the different towns and villages we stop as necessity requires to replenish our larder in the line of rice, vegetables, fruit, fish or chickens. Flour, coffee, tea, sugar, etc. we provided in Bangkok for the whole trip. The flour comes from America. When we bake bread it is always in the evening. We got leaven from the friends in Bangkok, and hold it in safe-keeping, lest we run short midway in our journey. When the boat stops for the night we have our loaves already risen in the pans, and our first care is a fire for its immediate baking.

The houses in these towns are scattered without regularity of streets or squares. Slight bamboo fences mark the boundaries of each house and garden. The enclosed space may be large, as in case of a nobleman's residence, or very small or maybe none at all in that of a poor peasant. The houses are built of bamboo, and are raised on posts. The roofs are covered with attap (a broad-leaved grass resembling blades of corn). Costlier and larger houses are made of teakwood, raised also on posts and the roofs covered with tiles. Not a brick house or a chimney is to be seen anywhere. At a distance the appearance of a town is strongly suggestive of barns and haystacks.

In contrast with these rude domiciles we find in the vicinity of every town large and elaborately finished temples. Upon them the wealth and taste of the community are concentrated. They are built of brick and plastered with white cement, which gleams like marble through the heavy, dark foliage of the trees in the temple-grounds. Wood-carvings and gold-leaf and mosaics of colored glasses or isinglass wrought into many devices decorate the front entrance and doorway. Standing apart, they have a domain of their own. Their broad grounds are enclosed by a brick fence covered with white cement. In proximity to the temple are the numerous little houses of the priests, whom we can see, at all hours and in all places, marching about in dress of bright yellow and with bald, shaven heads.

The shady seclusion of these grounds, with the images of Buddha sitting in darkness within the temple, and it being also the abode of the priesthood, make it a place of great sanctity and veneration to these superstitious people.

The same uniformity presents itself in every hamlet and town in our route. Between these places miles and miles of solitary silence stretch away, until we could readily imagine that all of human kind had forsaken the earth, and that we, by some strange destiny, were left in this big "basket of bulrushes" to go on and on interminably. What wonder, then, that the sight of a town or a passing boat are pleasant interruptions on this monotonous highway?

Reaching Nakawn Soowun (*i. e.* "City of

Heaven"), a provincial capital ten days' journey below Rahang, we find it situated at the junction of two branches of the river. Our route leads us into the left or north-west branch. Here the current is so swift that it becomes necessary to abandon the oars and resort to the long poles (iron-pronged at the end) to push the boat through the seething waters. All the dexterity and acuteness of the polesmen and pilot are put to the test now in keeping within the channel and to prevent our being cast upon a sandbar. The bed of the river is filled with masses of sand, which are in a state of perpetual change. Whirling and careering and finding no permanent lodgment, it is constantly displacing the channel, while we in our pursuit of it often miss it by a half space of the boat, one side of which is lying on a sand-drift, and at the other there may be the depth of twelve or fourteen feet of water. In pushing off, the current carries us down stream, and as we recover our distance again we think of the problem of the frog in the well, and *our* question is: If in one hour we gain *three* miles and lose *one*, *when* shall we reach Rahang?

However, as "perseverance conquers all things," we make our way through this war of waters (passing several towns on our way) more or less difficult of navigation, until we reach Rahang, where we find the river divided into several channels by little islands. The banks are high and the situation is beautiful for a city, with its mountain-range and its two sentinel mountains, one east, the other west, of the town.

Rahang marks the terminus of one-half our journey, and is the most northern of Siamese towns. By some it is reckoned as the most southern Laos town.

Its officials are in general Siamese, although its population is mixed and is estimated at fifteen thousand. Here we see Laos, Siamese, Chinese, Burmese, Peguans, Karens, etc. At a glance you will see the importance of its occupation as a missionary centre. About two years ago Dr. McGilvary labored alone here for many months. He was kindly received and much encouraged in his work. As its fruit some were led to the Saviour, and a permanent mission-station is to be established here during the coming year.

After two or three days' sojourn, spent in making preparation for the last part of our journey, we set forth again, and now to enter the border of Laos.

A few miles north of Rahang the river branches once more. We follow the north-west fork, called the Maping. The other branch (Mawang) leads to the province of Lakawn, where is one of our Laos churches. Although the country in this vicinity is comparatively level, yet the high banks and the views of distant mountain-ranges or hills diversify the scenery, which has not the dull monotony of the lower Menam—a pleasing change, and one that beguiles our time and attention as the boats are slowly making their way toward the rapids; and seven or eight days' "poling" bring us to the entrance of the ravine at their foot.

After weeks of voyaging on a broad river and through a flat country, with a wide horizon always encircling us, how anomalous to be confronted by this rocky pass, through which we must thread our way up forty rapids to the equally level territory of Laos beyond it! As we enter the gorge from the bright sunlight a sombre shade closes over us, even "the shadow of a great rock in a *weary land*." Wild and grand beyond description are these cañons and falls of the Maping River, and far exceeding any portrayal are the lofty, majestic mountains through which the river cuts its way.

No scientific survey has ever been made of the incline of the river, neither accurate measurement of the height of its mountains. Missionaries have approximated the altitude of some of the cliffs that border the river at from eight hundred to fifteen hundred feet. The geology and flora of this region remain unclassified. In silent beauty they await the coming of one who may some day unlock their secrets.

It occupies from one to two weeks in getting through the rapids. Some are so difficult of ascent as to require many hours for its accomplishment, while others can be gotten over in less than half an hour. By means of ropes and pulleys the men, with the "Heave-O" cry that is heard the world over, pull and push the boat upward through the gushing waters to the top of the fall, where we glide on in smoother ease—several miles, it may be—until a warning roar in the distance announces the approach to another rapid.

The river is very winding in its course and variable in breadth—narrow here, where perpendicular walls of granite rise sheer out of the water to prodigious heights, shutting us in with heavy shadows and deep solitude; wider there, where the rocks recede and stand apart, leaving valleys between, where many a boulder, large and small, in "rank confusion" lies, and where at the river's edge are spaces of white sandy beach. Here, where we halt for the night, a spacious ampitheatre encloses us apart from all of earth. Encompassed by the "everlasting hills" and under the silent stars, we sing our evening song of praise and worship "Him who is from everlasting to everlasting."

When the morning sunlight sends us on our way again, fresh revelations of beauty meet our wondering eyes—cliffs whose precipitous sides have been under the frescoing pencil of the sun and rain for a thousand years; castellated rocks with great columns of stalactites pendent on the gray walls; caves, crags and ravines with crystal cascades singing their solemn tune in lonely places. Nor is there destitution of vegetable life. In beautiful relief we find the rich green so peculiar to the tropics spread everywhere amongst this rugged scenery—trees, bushes, flowers, vines, ferns and mosses.

At the head of the rapids, and soon after passing out of the mountains, we get our first sight of a Laos village; and cheerful it is to come again amongst the habitations of men. During our two weeks' transit from this point to Cheung Mai we find a country having the same general features as that below the falls, with the exception of higher banks along the river; but here we have another type of people, entirely different in dress and *address* from those of the lower Menam. In common with the Siamese, they adhere to the Buddhist faith, adding also spirit-worship. They have the same habit of betel-chewing and the same forms of superstition, yet are a distinct race in customs and modes peculiar to themselves.

Many sights of exclusively new character are continuously meeting us too. The first that strikes the attention is the Laos system of water-wheels, used for the irrigation of rice-fields and gardens. They are made of bamboo, and are about twenty feet in diameter, and so adjusted as to be turned by the current of the river, their rims being furnished with small bamboo troughs which dip up the water as the wheel turns down, and is emptied as the wheel turns up into a large trough on the bank, and thence conveyed away by bamboo gutters. We see these wheels at every turn (right and left side) of the river, yet never lose interest in the rude machinery nor in the constant dipping and emptying process.

Still proceeding northward, we come amongst the cucumber-gardens which are planted on the broad sandbars. The Laos women, taking advantage of the low water at this season, occupy in free possession every available spot. The morning and evening they give to the cultivation of these sandy gardens, in which they raise cucumbers, beans and sweet potatoes. A fascinating sight it is to see these islands of "living green" scattered up and down the bed of the river.

But what a spectacle we have in the long lines of little cows and oxen, each laden with baskets of rice which they are carrying from the harvest-fields! Two long baskets, holding perhaps a bushel, are joined by a yoke which rests on the animal's back, while the baskets hang at its sides in the fashion of saddle-bags. In one train we may see twenty, forty or one hundred, and they walk single file. The leader has great preeminence in having its face masked with an embroidery of shellwork, while over its head stream the gay feathers of the peacock, and a string of bells (resembling sleigh-bells) is hung around its neck. Many of the others also have bells, and what a merry sound they make as they pass along on the banks above us! This is the only way the Laos utilize the cow, for they abhor milk and butter.

At Rahang we saw elephants in limited numbers, but here we see them in scores. This is literally true in the case of a prince's retinue, when we see from forty to sixty or more in one procession. They are in universal use as beasts of burden.

See those large buffaloes that stand at the edge of the water! They have short and thin hair—in some pinkish in color, in others gray. To cool themselves and to escape the biting insects they walk into the river and lie down, and are so completely submerged that not a spot of them is visible but the nose. Sometimes we see them standing in the water and birds hopping along their backs or perching between the huge horns. The buffalo manifests no annoyance, and the birds have it all their own way. They are old and familiar friends. These buffaloes are used in ploughing, and they also tread out the rice.

As it is now toward the close of the dry season, we frequently meet men and women fording the river, who in passing near our boat give the salutation of *Pi n'i tua?*—*i. e.* "Going where? coming from where?" It is a customary greeting, and carries no impertinence in it. We have answered this question from prince and peasant many a time during our journey, and it is rather a suggestive one, as in our reply we add *why* we come.

And here, walking about in the river, are the fishermen, busy by night and by day in their eager pursuits. At any hour of the night when we awaken we see their torchlights flashing hither and thither up and down the river.

So onward we go, seeing strange new sights and customs, passing village after village, exchanging greetings with the people; then through long miles of loneliness, where we are hedged in by trees and thickets of perennial green; yet with prow ever to the north (Cheung Mai the lodestone) we are steadily and surely nearing our goal.

And now, as we round this bend, the plain of Cheung Mai and the grand old mountains in the north-west come into full view. (The walled city, a mile distant to the westward, is not in the line of vision.)

As we move slowly up the river we see on the left bank an old temple overshadowed by old trees heavy with foliage. On the bank stand a number of Buddhist priests dressed in their yellow robes, who have come out of their little houses near the temple to look at the passing boats. The plain on both sides of the river and to the very banks abound in bamboo trees, as well as palm, cocoanut and an occasional banyan tree, which makes a large circumference of shade. In amongst the trees toward the river are the low bamboo huts of the natives, with here and there a more pretentious house built of teak-wood and roofed with tiles; a bridge spans the river. Just beyond the bridge (north) and on the west side we catch a view of Dr. Cheek's compound, and below it on the east side are the mission premises. Ah! how long we are in going over that last half mile!

Getting nearer, we see the waiting company on the bank and can feel the welcome that is all about us. Drawing up to the steps at the landing, how gladly we leave the boats to meet the cordial reception of the missionaries and native friends who stand with outstretched hands to receive us! Then, entering our new home, it is with thanksgiving and joy that the Master has appointed our service for him amongst the Laos.

CHAPTER XXIV.

RECOLLECTIONS OF CHEUNG MAI.

MY friends often say to me, "Tell us something about Laos, where you lived when a child." Listen, then, to a few of the things I remember about Cheung Mai, the people who live in it and some of their customs.

The province of Cheung Mai is the largest of the six Laos kingdoms, and is tributary to Siam. As no census is taken amongst this people, the population cannot be accurately stated, but it is supposed by some of the missionaries to be about eighty thousand. On the map which accompanies this book you will see that the capital city, Cheung Mai, is in latitude 18° 48′ north, and on the west branch of the Menam River; but the map will not tell you that its suburbs extend for some distance up and down each side of the river. In America the cities have no walls around them, but, like most Eastern cities, Cheung Mai is surrounded by high and thick brick walls, which in many places, however, have gone to ruin. When there is a rumor of war the king issues a decree that every man shall bring a teak log to repair the breaches in the wall. It was on the pretext that our two Laos Christians had disobeyed this command that they were arrested and so cruelly put to death.

You may be interested in what Sir Robert Schomburg says about the streets of Cheung Mai: "The streets of this city have been (originally) laid out at right angles. Time, it seems, has worked changes with regard to their regularity; nevertheless, I have not seen any other Siamese city laid out apparently so regularly at its foundation as Cheung Mai appears to have been." If you could walk about the streets of the city you would see, instead of our Christian churches, very many *wats*, or temples, and the *prachadees* which seem peculiar to Cheung Mai. Again we quote Schomburg: "'We pray to Guadama (or Buddh) on passing a *prachadee*,' said a Laos. 'They were built in memory of him and his divine acts, and some of his doctrines are written on tablets.' These remarkable towerlets are only cased with brickwork and filled up with soil. They are plastered on the outside, are of pyramidal shape and terminate at the summit in a sharp-pointed spire." Most of them are now in a state of decay, and are covered with vines and other vegetation. You would see no floating houses in Cheung Mai, as in Bangkok. The houses in the city are built far enough apart to afford space for the cultivation of flowers, for which the Laos have a great fondness. If the space is not large enough, they must still have flowers, so they cultivate house-plants. As temples are built of brick, it would "offend the spirits" to use brick for dwelling-houses, and teak-wood or bamboo is used instead. The bamboo houses of the Laos peasantry are roofed with thatch, the walls are made of bamboo matting and the floor of bamboo reeds, cut open so as to lie flat on the sills. Not a nail is used in such a house, but everything is secured with bamboo or ratan withes. Teak is the most durable wood we have, the houses built of it being the most substantial. These houses are covered with burnt tiles, and are more securely and closely built than the bamboo houses. All houses are built on posts several feet from the ground, and the teak houses have verandas, while the bamboo houses have open courts. The king has, however, built a new palace, and as it is a distant imitation of foreign houses which he has seen in Bangkok, it is in great advance of all others in Cheung Mai.

If a stranger should enter the eastern gate in the morning, his attention would be attracted by a large concourse of women, who seem to be dressed alike, as all wear skirts with horizontal stripes and have their shining black hair combed straight back and looped into a beautiful knot, which needs no pin to secure it. In this market very few men are to be seen; the women dress as do the Siamese men. Each market-woman carries everything in two large neat baskets, which are suspended from each end of a long, flat, flexible bamboo stick which lies on her shoulder. Some of these women are seated on mats, with market-baskets at their sides, while others are hurrying hither and thither. On the right side of the street is a woman in whose baskets are vegetables, for which she wishes salt in exchange. Over on the other side of the street is a woman with rice to sell, but she prefers silver. Silver is superseding salt as a medium of exchange. By her side is another woman with bouquets of flowers, for which she finds a ready sale; the purchasers carefully wrap them in banana-leaves, and after sprinkling a little water over them deposit them in a cool place until evening. Late in the afternoon the owner, if a lady, will appear with the flowers tastefully arranged in her hair, while a gentleman would wear his blossom in a hole in the lobe of his ear.

Unless the market-women have been successful in their business they do not leave the market until the increasing heat of the sun reminds them that it is time to retrace their steps homeward. Should you wish to accompany one of these women home, she would make you heartily welcome. On reaching the house you would first ascend several steps to the front veranda, which is usually, but not always, covered. From this veranda you would enter the front room or open court, where the daughter of the house spreads a clean mat on the floor for you and gives you a large three-cornered pillow on which you may rest one of your elbows. As a mark of hospitality a tray or box of betel-nut and seri-leaf will be set before you, and the invitation given to help yourself. Though you decline, you will be interested in watching those who may be seated beside you preparing their quid. The seri- or betel-leaf is taken first, and its tip overlaid with a minute quantity of slaked lime; then a pinch of finely-cut tobacco, a piece of cutch the size of a pea and the fourth of a dried areca-nut are wrapped in the seri-leaf, completing the mixture, which is chewed with evident enjoyment. To foreigners this is a very offensive custom, but so universal is it among both old and young that a box of these ingredients is carried with them in a bag suspended from the shoulders.

Should a member of the family be sick, you might be invited nominally to see her, but you may be assured that you would have more occasion to use your ears than your eyes, for the only window in the room is a round hole about three inches in diameter and several feet from the floor. The mattress is placed on the floor and surrounded by thick mosquito-netting, through which you would think it scarcely possible to breathe.

In the kitchen the stove consists of a wooden frame about four feet square and six inches high, filled with earth or sand. On this are placed three stones or bricks as rests for the pots, and between them the fire is kindled. As there is neither pipe nor chimney, the smoke is suffered to make its escape through openings as best it may, and if it is a bamboo house there is little difficulty. In the dry season cooking is often done in the yard.

Setting the table is not a laborious process. The table is round, about a foot and a half in diameter and six inches high. When meal-time arrives the table is taken down from its shelf and placed on the floor, and by it the tall, slender basket of steamed glutinous rice. On the table is a bowl of curry, hot with pepper and other spices, a dish of pickled fish and some vegetables and fruit. Every member of the family dips his rice into the common bowl of curry; but if any is very fastidious he may have a dish of his own, but when he has finished his meal, in order to avoid being considered extremely lazy, he must wash his own dish.

The women are not kept in bondage, as in China or India, but are a great power in the land; and the present queen has virtually the reins of government in her own hands, although her husband is the nominal head. She and her husband have always been friendly to the mission, and although the last persecution occurred since they came to the throne, it was carried on through the influence and power of the second king.

As the queen walks out a maid walks behind, carrying over Her Majesty a large lined and fringed silk umbrella with silvered handle, which may be about six or eight feet long. Behind this maid is another, carrying a gold betel-nut box, while dozens of others follow her, all walking in single file, for two persons are never seen walking side by side. The queen has several times visited the missionaries in their homes. While she and the first maids-of-honor are quietly talking in a lady-like manner in the parlor, her more inquisitive servants are making a thorough examination of the house and what are, to them, its curious and strange contents. This annoyance does not arise from ignorance or lack of refinement of feeling among the people, but because there are about this court, as well as about every other court, undesirable satellites.

Considering their disadvantages, the Laos are a remarkably refined race, as is shown by many of their customs. Should a person be telling another of the stream which he had crossed, and wished to say it was ankle-deep, as he would feel a delicacy in referring to his person, his expression would be, "I beg your pardon, but the water was ankle-deep." If one wished to reach anything above another's head, he would beg the latter's pardon before raising his hand. A great and passionate love for flowers and music also indicates a delicacy of feeling. Although, before missionaries went there, the women did not know how to read, they were always trained to be useful in their homes, and a Laos girl who does not know how to weave her own dress is considered as ignorant as a girl in this country who does not know how to read.

During the season of rice-planting and harvesting every member of the family works in the fields, and the baby is left at home under the care of the next oldest child. The children are thus early taught self-dependence, and a boy who here would be thought scarcely able to care for himself is expected, after the planting season, to take care of the buffaloes in the fields all day long. The Laos use buffaloes for ploughing, oxen for carrying rice, elephants for bearing other burdens and ponies for pleasure riding; in which latter only the gentlemen indulge, the ladies being debarred that pleasure. The motion of the elephant, which is the chief beast of burden, is a swaying one, but there is as much difference in the gait of elephants as in the gait of horses, and those with an easy gait always command very high prices. The top of a howdah, or elephant's saddle, is very much like that of a buggy, and the seat is not unlike the buggy-seat; the difference being that there is a railing in front which extends a third of the way across from each side, leaving an opening in the centre. The person who is so fortunate as to secure the middle seat is as comfortable as though seated in a chair, having the elephant's back as a footstool, but those sitting on either side have to assume the position taken when seated on the floor. The howdahs for carrying burdens have no coverings.

It is exceedingly interesting to watch the elephants when drawing logs from the river. The teak logs are floated down from the forests, and the elephants haul them on to land. An elephant is chained to a log, which he drags to its destination, and after he is unchained he quietly picks up his chain and walks to the river again. After bringing up the logs he is very careful that they shall lie entirely even, and if any end projects he pushes it with his tusks until his trained eye can see no fault. The air with which he moves back and forth from the river is very amusing; he seems to say, "I understand my business." The baby-elephant is a most mischievous creature, and is the horror of market-women, because he often insists upon meddling with the contents of their baskets.

The holiday which most interests the missionaries' children is the New Year, when all, and especially the young, give themselves up to a peculiar form of merry-making consisting in giving every one a shower. Armed with buckets of water and bamboo reeds, by which they can squirt the water some distance, these people place themselves at the doors and gates and on the streets, ready to give any passer-by a drenching, marking out as special victims those who are foolish enough to wear good clothes on such a day. It is most amusing to watch them, after exhausting their supply of water, hasten to the river or well and run back, fearing the loss of one opportunity. Sometimes several torrents are directed to one poor individual; then, after the drenching, shouts of laughter fill the air. On this day the king and his court, with a long retinue of slaves, go to the river. Some of the attendants carry silver or brass basins filled with water perfumed with some scented shrub or flower. When the king reaches the river's brink he goes a few steps into the water, where he takes his stand, while the princes and nobles surround him. The perfumed water is then poured on the king's head, afterward on the heads of the nobles, and they plunge into the river with noisy splashings and laughter. The custom is also observed in families. A basin of water is poured on the head of the father, mother and grandparents by the eldest son or by some respected member of the family. This ceremony has some religious significance, being symbolical of blessings and felicity; a formula of prayer accompanies the ceremony in each case.

There is a mountain about five miles from Cheung Mai on whose summit is said to be a large footprint of Buddha; hence it is sacred ground, and over it has been built a temple. Into the room over that sacred spot none but priests are allowed to enter. When passing on the streets, it is sad to hear the priests repeating their prayers, which are literally "vain repetitions," "for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking." Besides the worship of Buddha, and in seeming opposition to it, are the worship of evil spirits and the belief in witchcraft. If a person is sick it must be ascertained who is the person in whom resides the spirit that caused the sickness. When found, he and his family are banished to a distant province and his house and goods burned. This is a sure method of wreaking vengeance on an enemy; if the sick has no grudge against any one, and is averse to accusing his neighbors, he is beaten until the spirit within him permits him to reveal the secret. A widow and two sons, thus accused, sought the protection of the mission, and were allowed to remain on the mission-compound. They have since become Christians, and the two boys are in school expecting to study for the ministry. This experiment has since been tried several times by the missionaries, and always with success, as the natives do not now dare to meddle with those under the protection of foreign residents. Has not evil in this case been turned into a means of good? These people are thus brought into daily contact with the missionaries and constantly hear the gospel preached. So great is the Laos superstition that after one of the missionaries had taken with him one of these boys to a village on a missionary-tour, the request came from the villagers that next time the boy be left at home, because he caused sickness in the village. The answer was given that he had been with the missionaries a long time and had done no harm. "Oh, well," said they, "the spirits are afraid of you foreigners, and when the boys go into your yard the spirits climb up the tamarind trees by your gate and wait until they again leave your yard, when the spirits enter them again."

CHAPTER XXV.

A DAY AT CHEUNG MAI.

Washing the Idols.

LET me take you in imagination to our home in the Laos country. The house is on the banks of the river Maping, and faces the west. As you walk from the front gate up through the yard you will notice orange trees, cocoanut, bamboo, mango and tamarind, with the pomegranate, custard-apple, guava and coffee tree of smaller growth. Some of the flowers will seem familiar, as the rose, tiger-lily and one which bears a resemblance to the beautiful calla. The passion-flower, too, is here, with greater luxuriance of growth than in America, and many tropical flowers with heavy waxen petals having a rich perfume. Seated on the veranda, your eye takes in the view of river, plain and distant mountain, over which the bright sunshine is streaming. No wonder you exclaim, "Beautiful for situation is sunny Cheung Mai!"

But now let me take you to the ceremony of *idol-bathing*, which occurs yearly. We will get our hats and umbrellas, for it is afternoon and this is the "hot season," and join the groups of women who are passing to the nearest temple, about half a mile distant from the mission premises. Look how neat and clean they appear, dressed in white jackets and the Balmoral-patterned Laos skirts, with long muslin scarfs of crimson, purple, yellow or pink thrown over the breast and shoulders, and with flowers to contrast or correspond with the scarfs in their glossy black hair. Each woman bears in her hand a metal basin—in some cases of silver—containing scented water. They have spent part of the morning compounding perfumery from spices or flowers, which, when duly prepared, is thrown into the basin with fresh well-water just before leaving home. If you peep into the basin you will see newly-gathered flowers lying on the top of the water. It looks dainty, but its destiny is to wash off the dusty, musty idols that sit in darkness in their allotted corner from year to year. As the women pass along they talk merrily together. You will see children and bright-eyed girls as well as matrons and aged women.

As we approach the temple we get glimpses of its white walls through the foliage of the large trees which overshadow it. It is built of brick and plastered. The outer walls are whitened and have a polished appearance. It is surrounded by a low wall, built also of brick and plastered. We enter through a gate just in front of the temple-door. How neatly the grounds are kept, and how shady and pleasant they seem! In the same enclosure are the little houses where the priests eat and sleep. There are quite a number of these priests, young and old, walking about the grounds, dressed in yellow robes and with closely-shaven heads.

As we pass from the bright, warm sunshine into the dark, dreary building a feeling of gloom and sadness strikes the soul. The floor is hard, like stone, being made of some preparation of plaster and cement, and it looks cold and cheerless. The dull, high walls are without even a window to break the dismal outline.

On the side opposite the door is the shrine of Buddha. By the light of the little waxen tapers we observe a large idol of perhaps four feet in length, with proportionate body, made of wood and overlaid with gold-leaf. On a shelf below where this sleepy Buddha sits are scores of smaller idols, covered with gold or silver and similar in appearance to the large image. If we go nearer we shall see some of the offerings the women have brought and laid on this shrine. There are garlands of lovely flowers which fill the air with a heavy perfume, fruit of different kinds, piles of newly-made yellow robes, new mats, pillows with embroidered work, etc. These are all for the priests, and have been prepared by the skillful hands of women. You soon notice that more than three-fourths of those present are women.

As the time for their so-called worship has come, we look about for seats, but as none are provided, we shall have to do as the others do, sit down on the floor. The Laos women are kind and polite, and we soon find quite a number of soft straw mats at our service, with invitations to come and sit on this or that mat. Selecting our places, we are soon seated in an audience of heathen worshipers. How depressing and melancholy it all seems! The flickering flames of the tapers cast a weird light over the stupid countenance of the large idol, toward which every face is turned. The worshiping is not simultaneous; there is neither rule nor order in it. Neighbors who have not met for some time are chatting together in an ordinary tone of voice. A woman sitting by us is inquiring if we are comfortable, if this is not a pleasant occasion, if this is one of the ways we are accustomed to worship, etc. While answering her questions we are observing two women in front of us. One is a mother with a young child on her knee, in whose little hands she places a sweet, bright flower; then she closes the tiny hands, palm to palm, the flower projecting from the tips of the fingers, the stem within the palms. She then, pressing the hands closely with hers, raises them above its baby head, at the same time inclining its body in a bow toward the image of Buddha. So soon do the heathen mothers begin to teach their religion to their little ones. The other woman is very aged, and she places her hands just as the baby did, and, raising them high above her head, bends her body forward till her head and hands are pressing the stony floor. How abject, how devout she looks in her prostration before the idol! But she is again, in a minute, taking up the conversation where it was broken off, with quite a hearty laugh at some passing remark.

By this time a priest begins in a monotonous tone to read from one of the sacred books. The talking and laughing are going on in the mean time. No one present understands what is being read, the reader included, for it is in the Pali language, but they imagine some blessing comes from the reading, although it is in an unknown tongue.

This over, the ceremony of bathing the idols follows. All rise to their feet, the women getting their basins of water ready, while the men carry out the small images and place them in a miniature temple of bamboo which has been temporarily prepared in the yard. When they are all arranged the women gather around, and each one dashes her basin of water over them, but not touching one of them with the end of a finger; they are too sacred for a woman's hand to touch.

The splashing and dashing of the water is attended with great hilarity, terminating in a noisy romp.

As we turn homeward from this scene can we refrain from praying, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly, and reveal thyself to these poor benighted ones"? In the evening, as we stand again on the veranda, looking at the sunset, we see on the opposite side of the river a number of men and women busily gathering up sand and putting it into baskets. You are astonished when I tell you that this sand is carried to the temple-grounds and thrown into piles known as *sand-gods*, and a kind of worship is offered to them. As the night comes on the people scatter away to their homes; the noisy tumult subsides, leaving a quiet hush which we welcome most gratefully. But hark! that deep, heavy *thud! thud!* in the distance. What is it? It is the beating of the great drums which are hung in the temple-grounds, to awaken or notify their gods that an offering is about to be made. You will hear them at intervals through the night, even into the morning watches.

When the sun goes from you in America this evening it will rise upon the poor Laos people to awaken them to some of their many forms of idolatry.

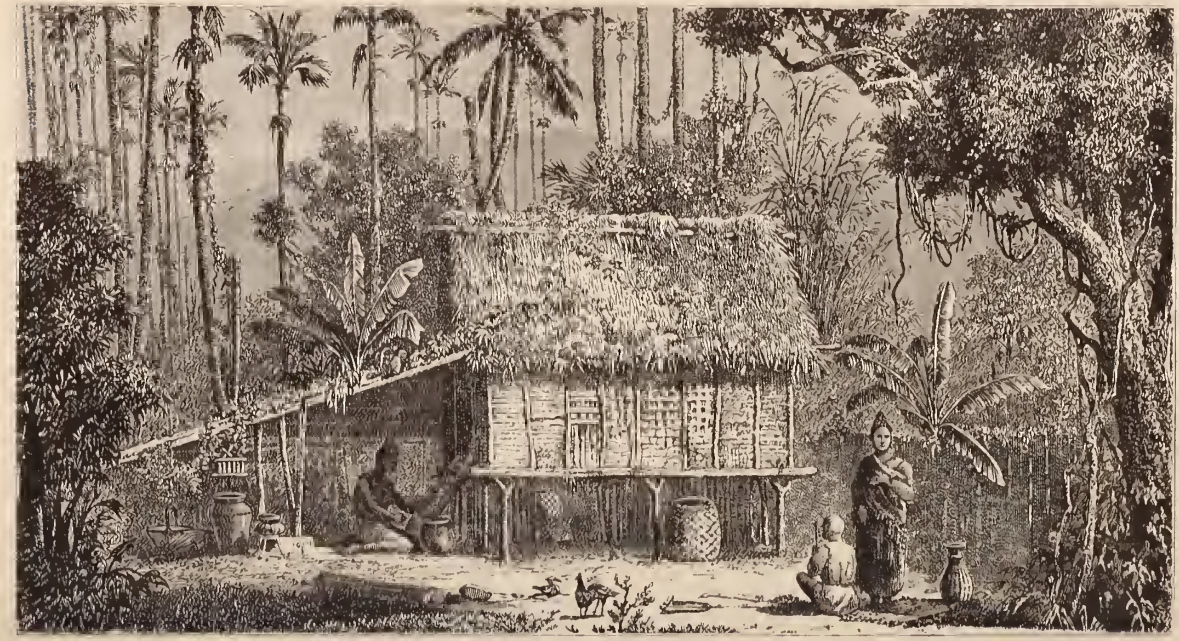
CHAPTER XXVI.

A LAOS CABIN.

THE cabin of the picture could hardly have been copied from any one in Cheung Mai. In the garden districts temporary huts may be found which resemble this one. But these, being for the most part on the open plain, are without the shade of palm or other trees.

The Laos captives near Petchaburee live in houses whose roofs have a circular appearance. The gables are enclosed with thatch, so arranged as to form a continuous roof with that of the house. This roof reaches so low as to shut out all view of the house itself from the passer-by. These people have come from the north, where both cold and storms are more severe than where they now live. In Cheung Mai, the eaves of the roofs and the ends projecting beyond the gables are sometimes caught with such force by the whirling storm that the roof is carried away. The whole of this house seems to be resting upon those short posts which fork at the top. In most of the houses of the Cheung Mai peasantry these short posts serve to support only the flooring. Strong beams or sills are laid upon them. Bamboo poles are laid across these sills about a foot apart and tied with ratan. Over these is spread the bamboo flooring. This is made from the trunk of a large-sized bamboo. It is cut into the proper lengths, and these are gashed lengthwise all over their surface by repeated strokes of the knife or axe. By this process the sticks become quite pliable. They are then slit open by passing the knife through one side of them from end to end. The broken and jagged edges of the inner side of the joints are smoothed off, and we have bamboo boards a foot or more wide. This flooring bends under the pressure of the feet, and when dry makes a creaking noise, which is not very pleasant. When riddled by a small black beetle that burrows in its fibres, it becomes unsafe to tread upon, and sometimes one breaks through it. But by putting it, when green, into water, and keeping it submerged until it passes through the process of fermentation, it is, in a great measure, free from the ravages of this beetle. The many chinks in this bamboo floor offer convenient passage for the streams of red saliva that flow from the mouths of its betel-chewing inmates.

The walls and roofs of these huts are supported by posts set in the ground some two feet of their length and reaching to the plates. The ridge of the roof also rests upon posts of the



A LAOS HOME.

necessary length. The posts for the walls are arranged according to a long-observed custom. They must be in sets of threes or fives, etc.; odd numbers bring luck. The spaces between each of these sets of posts have specific names. Religious superstition takes under its guidance almost every part of the work, and when the house is done it still directs as to the day and the manner of moving in to take possession. No doors or windows are found in the eastern wall. The family sleep with their heads toward the east. Part of the main building—generally the end facing south—is reserved for an open court. The east end of this court has a wall continuous with that of the house. Along this wall is a shelf upon which are placed flowers and other offerings in worship of Buddha and the good spirits. In this outer court, if the family are religiously inclined, the priests, by invitation, occasionally conduct a merit-making service for the prosperity of the household. In cases of sickness like services are held here. Preventives of sickness or other calamity are often seen resting on the top of the posts under the plate that receives the rafters. These consist of small pieces of cloth on which are written certain symbolic characters, the cloths themselves having become charms, potent against the intrusion of evil spirits, through the incantations of what our American Indians would call "medicine-men."

To make the cabin of the picture a copy of the common Cheung Mai house, the stair-ladder and the southern wall, as seen there, must be removed. A platform from eight to twelve feet wide must be raised within a few inches as high as the floor of the main building. This platform must extend from near the centre of the house at its southern end, beyond its south-western corner, to give passage-way to the kitchen. At the west end of this platform stands a covered settle for the earthen water-pots which hold water for drinking and cooking. The outer posts of this platform rise high enough to support a railing, and a board on top of this railing gives room for earthen flower-pots and for boxes of earth in which are growing, for family use, onions, red pepper, garlic, etc. The floor of the platform serves in daytime for drying betel-nuts and fruit. At night, after the heat of the day, it furnishes a place for rest under the cooling sky. The stairs are placed at the end of this platform. Such a house may be built entirely of bamboo except the grass thatch required for the roof. Neither hammer nor nail is needed for its construction. The different parts are held together by thongs of split bamboo or ratan. These houses are built at small cost. Very many of them are kept neat and tidy. And they have their conveniences. The writer had occasion to pay a native peasant a considerable sum of money.

This man, after counting the rupees and testing their genuineness, one by one, by poising it on the tip of his finger and tapping it gently with another rupee, tied the money up in a piece of rag, and, rising, dropped it from the top into the hollow of one of the posts that supported the wall behind him. This post gave him a perfect concealment for his treasure. It was *his* "safe," answering the same purpose to him that the iron one, with its intricate locks, does to the banker, except that in the case of the Oriental a stray spark would soon set his house and his "safe" ablaze together. Still, he could linger near for the few moments it would take the flame to lick up his house, and very soon after he would have his silver rupees, melted, it might possibly be, into a common mass.

There is no time—nor is it necessary—to speak of the trees that throw around and over the houses of the native peasantary their cool and protecting shade. Many of these houses are hidden away among the trees, some of which, for size, vie with those of the forest. Among the most beautiful of these trees are clumps of bamboo, from which material has been obtained for the building or repair of the very houses which they now envelop in their shade.

The owners of this little cabin seem busy—and happy as they are busy—at work. The wife may be cleaning the fish which her husband caught last night in a neighboring stream and brought home in that vase-shaped bamboo basket sitting behind her to the right. If so, she will string them in a row upon a bamboo splint, and when the fire is built she will stick the splint in the ground near enough to the fire to cook the fish. The husband is preparing the pot to cook or steam the rice. A neighbor woman was passing along, and has stopped to talk a few minutes and to see the woman cleaning her fish. Splint baskets of different sizes and shapes are standing around (some of them under the dwelling)—indications of industry and thrift.

There are a few of these bamboo cabins on the plains of Cheung Mai which have become vocal with the prayers and praises of God's people. Before the gospel came to them their inmates shared in common with their neighbors the transient joys of earth. For their fears and griefs they had no solace, either from earth or heaven. Now the "Light of life" shines into their souls, and they "joy in the Lord that bought them." And, however humble their homes may be, however fragile, the Saviour abides with them, and is preparing them for and leading them to his Father's house. The light, too, is shining from these Christian cabins to others yet in darkness. The Saviour has purposes of mercy for other homes in the cities and villages of these northern Laos.

CHAPTER XXVII.

SUPERSTITIONS OF THE LAOS.

A FULL account of the superstitions of the Laos would very fairly represent their intellectual attainments: their reasoning facilities are entirely in subjection to the imagination in accounting for the most ordinary natural phenomena; their reverential awe of supposed supernatural agencies stands in the place of any rational perception of natural causes. As, however, anything like a full statement of their superstitions would fill a volume, nothing more than a slight sketch of some of their more common superstitions will be attempted in this chapter.

It is difficult for any one living in a community surrounded with all the products of the inventive genius of man, and in the enjoyment of the varied results of intellectual development, to form any adequate conception of the benighted condition of the Laos mind as is indicated by a statement of some of the miserable absurdities entertained by them as sober and fundamental truths. Among them we can see examples in daily life of those hideous spectres of superstition such as served to guide the pitiful gropings of the intellectual and moral life of Europe three centuries ago. The man who should speak lightly of necromancy or deny the existence of spirits of every shade of malignity presiding over the affairs of society, or question the propriety of cutting off the heads of sorcerers, would be, in the ordinary affairs of life, untrustworthy, in religion a heretic, and in legislation a candidate for the honor of decapitation. Average Laos credulity—and the Laos are all average—will accept any absurdity, however monstrous, provided only it be supernatural. Consequently, any operation of nature outside of the most ordinary is satisfactorily accounted for by reference to some demon or spirit, or some other equally plausible account is given in explanation of the phenomenon. So the uprooting of a tree by a hurricane is the work of an enraged spirit; an earthquake is produced by an immense fish moving its fins; while a horde of demons preside over the mountains, the forests, the fields and streams. A special divinity is supposed to preside over each forest, and the hunter who collects the honey of the wild bee must make an offering to this divinity to ensure a good yield of honey. Indeed, almost every transaction of social or domestic life must be effected with direct reference to one or another of a multitude of spirits.

A Laos going on a journey must hunt him out a wise man, one who can read, and ascertain a lucky day for starting; this is done by consulting a kind of astrological table. A day of the week being found to coincide properly with a day of the moon and with the nativity of the pilgrim, offerings are duly made to the spirits, to ensure, if not their good-will, at least their neutrality; then with a feeling of security the journey is undertaken. No imaginable exigency of business could induce a Laos to depart from this method; and the occasional impetuosity of a foreigner arouses in a Laotian a sleepy kind of compassionate wonder. The commander entering upon a campaign can move only upon a lucky day and after making the necessary offerings, which is a ceremony involving delay and careful attention just in proportion to the importance of the expedition. Traders traveling by boats cannot enter or leave the mountains through which the river winds without a prayer and an offering of wax tapers, flowers and incense to the mountain-spirits; a neglect of this ceremony may entail the loss of a boat in the rapids, or indeed any calamity.

Twice a year offerings are made to the spirits of the river for having defiled the water by bathing and by throwing refuse into it. Toy boats and rafts are made, upon which are placed flowers, betel-nut, seri-leaf, incense and lighted tapers; this offering is a public ceremony, and is performed once in the eleventh month and once in the twelfth month, the lighted boats and rafts making a very pretty illumination of the river.

When any one is dangerously ill, one method of appeasing the spirits is to make a miniature boat or raft, on which are placed clay images, rice, vegetables, meat, fruits and other food, flowers and wax tapers; the boat or raft is placed either upon the water or in the street, whichever is the public highway. The spirits are supposed to find this food, etc. and accept the token of homage.

For three months of the year, during Buddhist Lent, lanterns are hung aloft to guide the spirits through the air, and thus leave them no excuse for coming down in the streets. The observance of this custom is very general, and is probably so, partly at least, from the fact of its being a very sickly season, diseases being supposed to be due to the spirits.

During the latter part of the dry season (from February to May) the Laos people very religiously observe the various rites and ceremonies of spirit-worship. This is a season in which no remunerative work for the people at large can be engaged in, and, perhaps in consequence of this, the time is occupied in various religious observances, and these are principally spirit-worshipings.

One ceremony which was originally peculiar to the Peguans (descendants of war-captives), but has been to a considerable extent adopted by the Laos, is observed at this season. All the family connections join in having a spirit-festival. A booth is built; food and drink are provided in abundance for those who participate in the ceremony; the booth is canopied with white muslin supported by light bamboo posts, and is open all around, with arches made of cocoanut-leaves; at one side of the booth is a space partially enclosed with gay screens, in which the offerings to the spirits are placed on a table. These offerings consist of food and drink, also clothing. From the centre of the canopy is suspended a white cotton sheet. The ceremony is a dance performed only by women, who enter the enclosure, and, after partaking freely of the food—these spirits have a special weakness for pork and whiskey—bury their faces in the suspended sheet mentioned above, waiting for the descent of the spirit. The dancers do not have to wait long for the entrance of the spirit, for the whiskey has made them very sensitive to the spirit-influence; when the spirit has entered the medium begins to sway her body to and fro and to gesticulate with the hands and arms, after the fashion of Laos dancing, to the music of a Laos orchestra. Laos music is appropriate to such an occasion, for it is a combination of agonizing sounds which for harshness cannot perhaps be excelled. The spirits seem to have thirsted for a year, for the fair dancers make frequent visits to the whiskey, and even affectionately take a bottle in each hand and dance around with them, never neglecting to administer to the insatiable thirst of the spirit. After attaining to an advanced stage of intoxication the dancers array themselves in the costumes provided for the spirits—usually articles of men's clothing—and, arming themselves with swords and spears, they stagger after intruders or acquaintances, who, if caught, must engage in the dance. This unseemly revelry continues from early morn until dark, the Laos band rendering the one favorite air without ceasing, except to take an occasional draught of the beverage sacred to the spirits.

While the Laos believe that the universe is controlled by spirits, their belief in magic implies that certain persons can command the services of some of the spirits to accomplish the darkest designs. No superstition is more general throughout Siam and Laos than the belief in magic. Among the Laos it is supposed that a sorcerer can command a spirit to assume the form of an insect, which, flying against the person whose destruction is intended, enters him and is transformed usually into a buffalo hide, though it may assume after entering the body of the victim any form, according to the will of the sorcerer. The Siamese very generally believe that the Laos possess this occult power, and the Laos, knowing little concerning it, credit the Karens and other mountain-tribes with it. About two years ago two Karens were brought to the city of Cheung Mai by some of their neighbors, charged with having caused the death of a young man by enchantment. The case was very clear against the accused. The young man had a musical instrument which these Karens wished to purchase; the owner refused to sell it, and a short time afterward he became ill, and died, I believe, on the fourteenth day of his illness; at his cremation a portion of his body would not burn and was of a shape similar to the musical instrument. Thus it was clear that his death had been caused by a spirit entering his body and taking the form of the coveted musical instrument. The Karens were beheaded, protesting that they were innocent of the crime charged against them, and threatening that their spirits should return and wreak vengeance for their unjust punishment. It is but just to add that cases of this kind are not of frequent occurrence.

These nightmares of the Laos imagination are almost incredible to us, though they are terrible realities to them.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

TREATMENT OF THE SICK.

THE treatment of the sick among the Laos ranks as a distinct profession. Although the Laos doctors may not have classified their knowledge of diseases in a way that we should call scientific, and although a white foreigner might be so unsolicitous of his own bodily welfare as to prefer the chance of nature to the professional skill of the whole Laos faculty, still, their system of medicine is quite an extensive one and embraces some very abstruse subjects. The Laos doctors are not required to have a diploma and do not attend any medical school, nor do they, as a rule, serve an apprenticeship; they just take to doctoring naturally. Some of them are widely known as successful general practitioners; others gain considerable notoriety in the treatment of certain diseases and become specialists of wide reputation. Some three or four medical books, treating of the mysteries of vital phenomena and learnedly elucidating the doctrine of the four elements, enrich Laos literature; these classic volumes also contain invaluable formulæ, and the doctor who is so fortunate as to own one of these books is held in high repute for his superior learning, notwithstanding he may not be able to decipher a line of it. Practically, the Laos, so far as the average doctor is concerned, have no medical treatises.

The Laos are without a definite knowledge of any of the organs or functions of the human body; no Harvey or Sylvius has ever arisen among them. All of their theories concerning the bodily functions and the four elements are merely philosophic guesses. Imagination has taken the place of reason and experiment. Speculation furnishes them with a satisfactory solution of the problem, "Why is it that instead of flesh (muscles) only, tendons are found in the human body?"

The Laos divide diseases into two classes. The first class includes all those disorders which may be considered as simply disturbances of equilibrium caused by an undue preponderance or diminution of one of the four elements—wind, fire, earth and water; the second class embraces all those more serious disorders of the human system which are due directly or indirectly to the influence of offended spirits.

The Laos materia medica embraces a considerable variety of medicines, nearly every one of which is supposed to be a specific in some disease; and, although his ideas of the medicinal qualities of these drugs may be entirely theoretical, not to say fanciful, the Laos doctor administers them just as freely as if he had experimentally demonstrated their physiological properties. The bones, teeth, blood and gall of the tiger, bear, elephant, rhinoceros and crocodile are among the most highly-esteemed remedies; besides their specific curative properties, these medicines impart the courage of the tiger, the stability, dignity and longevity of the elephant, the solemnity and tranquillity of the crocodile, the equanimity, contentment and philosophic indifference to external things and other virtues characteristic of the rhinoceros. Likewise, they eat the bones of the raven to protect them from evil spirits, and perhaps also to enable them to eat with impunity and relish of any dish; it is to be feared that certain purloining instincts of this bird have been communicated in this way!

Patient observation and intelligent experimental investigation are entirely unknown to the Laos medicine-man; it is doubtful if he has, either by intelligent experiment or by accident, arrived at one solitary verifiable fact either in physiology or therapeutics; satisfied with his supposed stock of knowledge, he has no desire to increase it.

When called to see a patient the Laos doctor states authoritatively what the ailment is; then proceeds to prepare a dose of medicine, which process it is interesting to watch. Seating himself upon a mat on the floor, he calls for the medicine-stone—a block of fine sandstone kept in nearly every house—and upon it rubs his drugs, which are carried in the crude form. The dose is composed of indefinite proportions of various roots, herbs and minerals, the teeth, bones, blood and gall of the tiger, bear, crocodile, etc., egg-shells, and anything else that the doctor may have; for, perhaps with a view to alternative conditions, he uses a portion of every drug he has, thus leaving slim chances of any unrecognized or latent symptom remaining untouched. The portions of the various drugs worn off by these rubbings are carefully washed into an earthen vessel, and water to the amount of about half a gallon is added; this makes one dose, or, in case the patient is not strong enough or is not of sufficient capacity, the medicine is to be administered in small doses—say half a pint or so—every half hour. This kind of treatment is continued for two or three days, or, if the patient is exceptionally vigorous, it may continue longer, a new doctor usually taking charge of the patient on each succeeding day. The attending physician usually remains by his patient day and night until it is decided to call in another doctor or until convalescence is established. If the patient grows worse, two or three doctors are called in during the day, each one promising to effect a cure, and each in turn is dismissed if an immediate improvement is not evident. This is continued until the exhausted sufferer no longer tosses to and fro, but lies unconscious, breathing hard, the patient watching of the fond mother or sister is nearly over, the anxious pleading whisper is hushed, and the death-wail tells that another home is desolate, another soul seeks its eternal destiny.

As already mentioned, the Laos imagine many diseases to be caused by spirits. Those diseases which are peculiarly fatal, and over which they can exercise little or no control, are supposed to be due to agencies outside of nature. This belief encourages a disposition to neglect the investigation of natural causes and to multiply the instances of supposed supernatural manifestations. Thus the appeal to the supernatural to account for those deadly diseases so common in tropical climates strengthens and extends the superstitious belief which alone furnishes this interpretation of the mysterious phenomena of nature. This tendency to bring the intellectual faculties under subjection to the imagination is, of course, not limited to the realm of diseases, for every extraordinary phenomenon is supposed to be supernatural. The prevalence of fatal diseases and the frequency of epidemics secure this stronghold of superstition; any scheme which has for its object the elevation and enlightenment, the religious and intellectual regeneration, of the Laos must include efficient medical work, for in no other way can these superstitions be more immediately affected than by the rational treatment of diseases.

This belief in the supernatural causation of diseases is not confined to those disorders which are of rare occurrence: many forms of disease of every-day occurrence are attributed to spirits. Rheumatism is said to be caused by a "swamp-spirit;" the treatment for it might be said to be more surgical than medical. When a person is afflicted with a swamp-spirit, the doctor takes an axe or a large knife and draws the edge of it along the affected part, without, however, touching it, at the same time advising the spirit to return to its former abode.

Epileptic seizures are supposed to be due to spirits, and the proper treatment is for two or more men to stand upon the thighs and pelvis of the unfortunate sufferer, and so prevent the entrance of the spirit into some of the vital organs. This plan is said to be quite successful, as many patients so treated have recovered.

The absurdities of superstitious belief among the Laos might be multiplied indefinitely: these instances are, however, sufficient. Impressed with a sense of their utter helplessness in dealing with those mysterious agencies which are so hostile to them, they invariably conclude that man is subject to the government of invisible and malignant beings of whom he can know nothing, and whose anger, when aroused, no merely material agencies can appease. So in every case of sickness offerings must be made to the offended spirits; readings from the sacred books and prayers must be rehearsed.

These beliefs, however, as long as they remain general and theoretical, are mild in their effects in comparison with another superstition of the Laos, which I must not fail to mention. Abandoning the vague and general, in this superstition their belief becomes terribly specific: they imagine that the spirit or essence of one living person may enter the body of another person and inflict serious injuries, and, unless expelled, even destroy life; furthermore, they can ascertain whose spirit it is. This kind of spirit they term *Pee K'a.* Hysteria, delirium, variation of surface temperature are among the symptoms supposed to indicate this kind of possession. The treatment is a specialty, and the doctors who understand these cases gain great notoriety and are sent for from far and near to exorcise the spirits. The exorcism involves a practice full of savage cruelty to the patient and of barbarous injustice to the unfortunate neighbor whose spirit is accused of having entered the patient. I had repeatedly requested permission to witness an investigation of one of these cases, and at last had an opportunity. I learned that the patient had some months ago suffered from a protracted illness (probably typhoid fever), and during her illness had lost the power of speech. She recovered gradually and became quite well and strong, but was still unable to speak. One day she went with a party of children to a temple, and while there spoke a few words more or less distinctly; her companions became alarmed and ran home. Supposing the case to be one of witchcraft, the owner (the girl was a slave) sent for the spirit-doctor; three of these specialists were present when I reached the place. After asking some questions concerning the previous illness of the patient, a consultation was in order, the most important feature of which seemed to be the drinking of a bowl of arrack (whiskey distilled from rice); these spirit-doctors took frequent and prolonged draughts; they drank as if to slake an ancient thirst. I thought they liked it, but I was informed that the learned doctors drank simply in order to facilitate their communication with the spirit, and that the chances were that they did not like the taste of whiskey.

Having at length decided upon a suitable line of action, the doctors proceeded to the investigation of the case. The most eminent of the doctors—at least the one who had consumed the most whiskey—took a tiger's tooth, and, muttering some gibberish, drew it along the side and back of the patient, leaving deep scratches; the patient, unable to speak, of course writhed and struggled. At length, after a deeper incision (which drew the blood), the patient uttered an audible cry; this sound was interpreted by the ferocious, drunken spirit-doctors to indicate the situation of the spirit. With a vigorous thrust in the side, while his assistant, thinking he had discovered the spirit in another region, was equally attentive, the chief inquisitor with foul and abusive language ordered the spirit to leave. The exorcism was a failure, and the spirit refused to make itself known, though pressingly flattered to do so by the persuasive and forcible eloquence of these three drunken, demoniac savages.

In these investigations any injury inflicted is directed against the spirit, and any answers to questions asked by the doctor or the friends of the patient are supposed to proceed from the spirit; so the doctor asks the name of the spirit, and the patient, if conscious or partly so, will, in order to escape torture, give the name of some acquaintance, probably some near and intimate neighbor; for usually some suspicion will have been expressed. The name of some one having been mentioned by the patient, various questions concerning the domestic relations of the family of the person named are asked, such as the names of all the members of the family, the number of cattle they own, the amount of money they have, and sundry other questions concerning things supposed to be known only to members of the family. If to all these questions satisfactory answers are given, the person whose name is mentioned is accused of witchcraft, and, together with all his family, all in the house, must leave the neighborhood; everything belonging to them, except such articles as can be easily removed, is committed to the flames; they cannot sell their gardens nor rice-fields nor any other possession, since no one will risk the supposed contamination. The accused cannot settle in any adjoining neighborhood, but must go as strangers into some distant province occupied only by others like themselves driven from their homes upon charges of witchcraft. All the accumulations of a lifetime of thrift and economy may at any time be sacrificed to the whims of this blind credulity. This superstition is one of the greatest social evils; indeed, it entails more serious injury than all other beliefs and practices combined. No one receives any benefit from it; it is purely destructive. Hundreds of families are yearly driven from their homes in obedience to the requirements of this degrading prostitution of the human intellect.

MEDICAL MISSIONARY WORK AMONG THE LAOS.

Since the establishment of the Cheung Mai mission in 1867 the missionaries have made the care of the sick a part of their regular work. Dr. Vrooman was the first missionary physician sent to Cheung Mai; he was compelled, on account of his health, to leave there in 1873, having remained only about two years. Dr. Vrooman's successor arrived in Cheung Mai in the spring of 1875. During the six months ending Sept. 30, 1875, about six hundred patients received treatment of the foreign doctor. The work has increased steadily since that time; in the year ending Sept. 30, 1882, thirteen thousand persons received treatment. This increase in seven years from about one thousand to thirteen thousand a year indicates that the work of the medical missionary supplies a demand.

Because of having no hospital accommodations, the work has been chiefly dispensary work, while as many as could be personally attended have been visited at their homes. Notwithstanding this large increase in the number of patients treated, the results of the medical work have not been very gratifying. The difficulties with which one has to struggle in dispensary work or house visitation are so great as to render any effort almost devoid of satisfactory results from a professional point of view; and, obviously, the conditions which interfere with the medical work will also interfere with the missionary work; in fact, what are molehills in the former become mountains in the latter.

The houses of the Laos are located and built in violation of all hygienic considerations, and in addition to the counteracting influences arising from the imperfect sanitary surroundings, the foreign physician has to contend against persistent meddlesome interference with his directions; and in this contention he wages a losing warfare, for he has arrayed against him that influence which is so potent everywhere — namely, the prestige of ancient superstitions sanctioned by ignorance and custom. In the treatment of diseases the skill of the most competent physician is of no avail without the faithful and skillful execution of his orders, which can be accomplished alone by an intelligent and sympathizing nurse—I might rather say, a trained nurse. The foreign physician is usually sent for as a last resort, and is simply expected to perform a miracle; and unless he in a measure satisfies the wildest requirements he is pronounced a failure, and his presence is considered as rather an intrusion and a source of mischief; for he forbids ceremonies which are supposed to be essential to the welfare of the household, a neglect of which may occasion both immediate and remote disaster.

Although spirit-worship and other religious observances are of paramount importance in their homes, they willingly neglect them when treated upon our own premises.

Upon entering a sick chamber the physician finds the air almost suffocating, and must conduct his examination by the dim light of a small wax taper, for in the construction of a Laos house the principal object to be attained seems to be the utter exclusion of light, there being no doors or windows except the necessary entrance. The examination concluded, the physician gives his directions concerning the management of the patient and goes his way, with the assurance that his instructions will be regarded by the friends of the patient as of some importance or as utterly insignificant, just according to their own views of the case.

Dispensary work is equally unsatisfactory. The friends of the patients come to the dispensary and describe as well as they can the most obvious symptoms, and from the information obtained in this exceedingly unsatisfactory way an opinion as to the nature of the patient's ailment must be arrived at and a prescription made. The results of such a method could not be otherwise than unsatisfactory even with intelligent nursing and a faithful observance of directions. As to the nursing of the sick among the Laos, it is sufficient to state that it is such as to seriously compromise any favorable tendencies, and the directions given by the physician are usually subject to any amendments that may be suggested by the inclinations of the patient or the opinions of nurses or friends. If supposed to be seriously ill, the patient is visited by a throng of relatives, friends and acquaintances, and is disturbed by a ceaseless hum of voices; elderly ladies entertain one another at the bedside of the patient with the fullest accounts of the nature, course, duration and proper treatment of similar cases which they have witnessed, some of them relating the circumstances of the marvelous cures effected by some skillful doctor while others dwell upon the melancholy import of the symptoms.

Having concluded his daily routine of dispensary work, the foreign doctor makes his second visit to his patient. Arrived at the house, he probably finds it filled with the relatives and friends of the patient, all devoutly attending a reading from the Buddhist scriptures by a priest or a number of priests, according to the means of the patient; long prayers and chants are rehearsed, sacred water is sprinkled over the patient, offerings of flowers and wax tapers are made to the household spirits. After this ceremony, which lasts for several hours, the patient passes into the hands of a native doctor.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A TOUR IN THE LAOS COUNTRY.

This journey was made by G. W. Vrooman, M. D., and the Rev. Mr. McGilvary in 1872, to ascertain, in a portion of the East but little known to us, the size and comparative importance of the Laos chief cities and villages in reference to missionary work, to preach the gospel, and to observe the disposition of the authorities and people toward foreigners, especially toward teachers of the Christian religion.

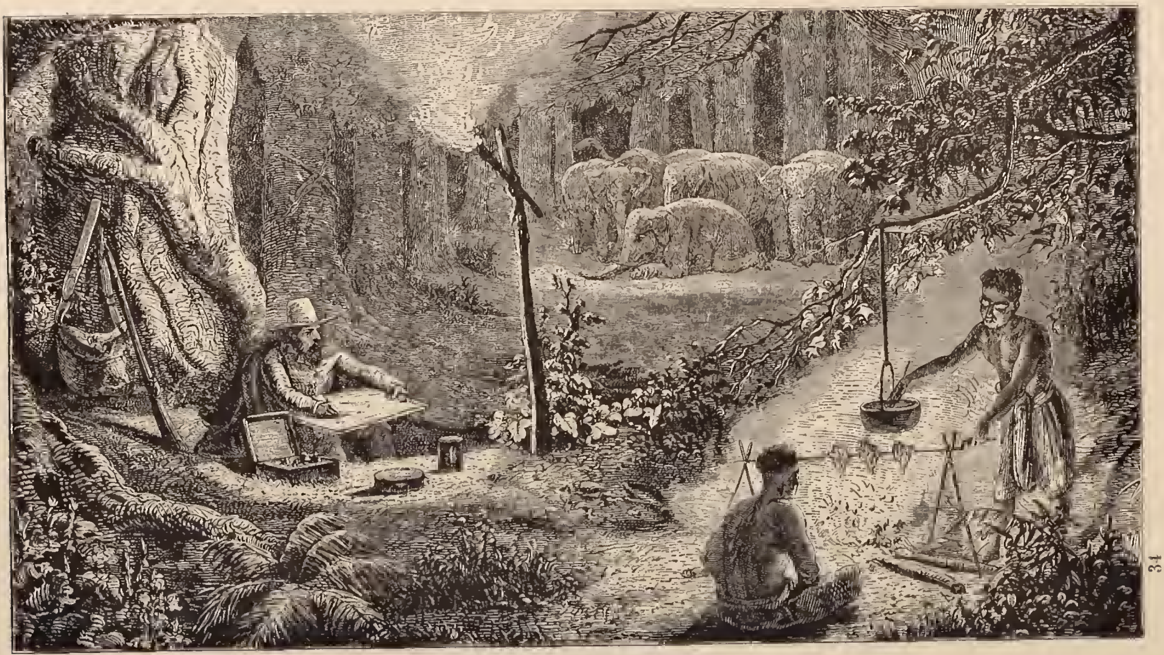
DURING the early part of the dry season our time had been so occupied that it was not till after the first heavy showers of the rainy season had fallen that we decided to go. Our journey, in consequence, was hurriedly made, and the time we remained in different cities was barely sufficient to allow us opportunity to accomplish our objects satisfactorily to ourselves. At our stopping-places the gospel was preached and a few books were distributed—few, because we had no more. We visited the authorities, made known the object of our journey through their country, and endeavored to ascertain the leading features relative to their provinces, their population, extent, etc., and to judge whether sufficient encouragement was offered to repeat the visit at some future time.

After deciding upon the expediency of the tour we were for some time in doubt whether it would be wise to go at that season of the year. Foreign residents of this country consider it unsafe to travel during the rainy season, and even the natives fear long journeys through the forests. The jungle is the home of a multitude of savage beasts, but these are not more dreadful than its malaria.

After engaging our elephants we went to the king for a passport. Had this been refused us we could not have gone. He, however, very cordially furnished us with one, and wished us a prosperous journey. This passport was so worded that we were to travel as his guests, and yet to go for the purpose of teaching the Christian religion, healing the sick, etc. It was so worded, I believe, out of deference to our request, and not from any special interest in our work. We were furnished with the kind of passport given to certain Siamese officers who are here occasionally, or to their own princes when required to visit a neighboring province; and because it is customary to state the object of their journey in a passport there occurred the anomaly of a Buddhist king sending men forth to preach the Christian religion under his protection. I may add here that after we had gone an officer of the Siamese government here at the time, reproved the king sharply for having allowed us to go. I think the Siamese are jealous of the visits of foreigners to their distant provinces. A few years ago Cambodia was won from its allegiance by the French. By many of the natives we are believed to be political agents acting in behalf of England or of some foreign power.

Our preparations for the journey were soon completed. Perhaps the most important articles in our outfit were medicines. With our letter we need not have taken money in our purses, but no script from any earthly potentate can give such security against malaria as a few grains of quinine, and no person is safe in this country during the rainy season without it. Besides medicines and money to pay our way, we took a small supply of canned provisions—only enough, however, for use in case of sickness, as our food was to be procured on the way. It was necessary to take as little baggage as possible. A tent, blankets and a few extra articles of clothing, books, cooking utensils, guns and ammunition, about completed our outfit. We had four elephants, two of which were reserved for baggage. We had also an escort of six natives, besides those who accompanied the elephants—fourteen in all.

After commending ourselves and those we left to the care of God, we set out at noon, April 15th, on our journey. Elephant-traveling is slow, scarcely averaging two miles per hour. Our course for the first hundred miles lay toward the north-east. The level country over which we first passed is occupied by a rural population. Our road, for the first ten or twelve miles, was through rice-fields. Here and there we could see small hamlets, whose sites were marked by graceful palm trees. Narrow strips of forest, extending in irregular curves, joined the different villages and formed the near boundary of our horizon. They marked the course of small streams and irrigating canals. After six hours' travel we left the plain for the mountain-country, but two hours before doing so we had entered the forest. Thenceforth, till we reached Muang-Pau, a small village eight days' journey distant, we saw no houses, save in a small hamlet of thirty or forty inhabitants at "Boiling Springs." Our route, a main road traveled over betwixt Cheung Mai, Cheung Rai and Cheung Toong, was merely an elephant-path through a dense forest. On Sabbath, while encamped near a small stream in this forest, we met Saan-ya-wee-Chai, the native Christian whose home is in Muang-Pau. He was on his way to Lampoon. It was our intention to visit him at his home, but Providence directed his steps to us. He excused himself for traveling on Sunday by saying that he was not well instructed in the duties and observances of the Christian religion, and that



CAMPING IN A LAOS FOREST.

also he was in company with those who would not stop.

After eleven days from home we arrived at Cheung Rai. This is a small city of three hundred houses, population between two and three thousand. It is in the province of Cheung Mai, and its chief officers receive their appointment from the chief or king of this place. It is situated on the banks of the Ma-Kok, fifty or sixty miles from where that river joins the Ma-Kawng (or Cambodia) River. The large plain outside of the walls of the city is but thinly populated. The people are mostly fishermen. Only a small portion of the surrounding country is under cultivation, hence there are but few villages in its vicinity. Here we dismissed our elephants, and by noon on the following day had completed our preparations for the river-journey. During our delay there Mr. McGilvary was occupied with the numbers of people who visited us at our sala, preaching the gospel, distributing from our supply of Siamese books to those who could read, and gathering information concerning the country.

We set out again as soon as our boat and men were ready. Our passage down the Ma-Kok to the Cambodia River occupied two days, during which time we passed four or five small villages of twenty or thirty houses each. These were near to Cheung Rai, within three hours' journey of it. We spent our Sabbath on a sandy bank of this river, as we did the preceding one, many miles away from human habitations. In the morning we discovered tracks of a large tiger near our boat. These fierce brutes are quite numerous throughout the country. For mutual protection against their attacks, and the more dreaded depredations of robbers, nearly all the people of this country reside in villages or congregate in larger numbers in cities. The Kamoos, a mountain-tribe of people, inhabitants of this country at an earlier period than the Laos, form an exception to this rule. More about them hereafter.

Near the mouth of the Ma-Kok is a mountain by the Laos called Doi-Prabat-Rua, or "sacred feet and boat." It is considered a holy place, and many pilgrims go thither seeking to make merit. It does not have, like the mountain of a similar name in Siam, an impression of a foot in its rock. Its object of veneration is an unfinished stone boat. The legend of the people is that Gotama Buddha commenced to hew out of the solid rock a boat which was to be about thirty feet in length. It was left when about half finished, and remains an object of superstitious veneration, if not of worship. Few if any Laos will pass it without fervently raising the folded hands toward it and murmuring a prayer.

We stopped a day at Ban Saao, a small village on the Cambodia River, near the mouth of the Ma-Kok, and from there visited the ruins of the city of Cheung Sau. This was at one time the largest and most populous city in this part of the interior; it was the capital city of a very powerful Burmese province. Seventy years ago the city was taken and destroyed by the Siamese, its inhabitants put to the sword or forced into slavery and the entire province rendered desolate, in which condition it remains to this day. The province thus depopulated, and now the home only of wild beasts, is not as large as the province of Cheung Mai, I believe. The territory under the rule of the king of Cheung Mai is about as large as the States of Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island; the waste province of Cheung Sau is probably about as large as Connecticut. Nothing now remains of the destroyed city save the walls and the tumbling ruins of temples. Thousands of idols, images of Buddha, are scattered around in the old wat- or temple-grounds. Helpless to save the city from its fate, they were abandoned, and are now trodden under foot of the deer, wild elephants and tigers, whose tracks now form the by-ways of that city.

After wandering about the place for several hours, we returned to Ban Saao, and then continued our journey down the Cambodia. One day's travel brought us to Cheung Khawng. This is a Laos city of two or three thousand inhabitants, and belongs to the province of Muang-Nan. No inhabitants on the river-banks between Ban Saao and Cheung Khawng. Many years ago a village was commenced, several houses built and a clearing made in the forest. About twenty houses were reared, but the people were obliged to desist, as many of them were killed by the tigers. We remained at Cheung Khawng two days, called upon the governor and some of the officers, visited many of the temples, and everywhere talked with those who were willing to listen. Cheung Khawng is also a fisher-town. There are very few suburban villages, fewer even than around Cheung Rai.

Left Cheung Khawng on the 3d of May. Our passage down the Cambodia to Muang-Luang-Prabang was rapidly made, and occupied only five days, including the Sabbath. The distance to the latter place from Cheung Rai is probably about three hundred miles, or from Cheung Khawng nearly two hundred. The current of the Cambodia is very swift, in places so much so that it was dangerous to navigate. The river is nearly a mile wide in places, and where the channel is narrowed it rushes along with frightful rapidity. No scenery is finer, not even that of the Hudson, during the entire distance we traveled on it. Mountains rise from either bank to the height of three or four thousand feet. The river fills the bottom of a long winding valley, and as we glided swiftly down it there seemed to move by us the panorama of two half-erect, ever-changing landscapes of woodland verdure and blossom. Only as we neared the city did we see rough and craggy mountain-peaks and barren towering precipices. The villages along the river are few and small — from Cheung Khawng to within three hours' travel of Muang-Luang-Prabang not more than six, averaging twenty to thirty houses each. About three hours from the latter city is the mouth of the Ma-Oo River. This river comes down from the north and drains the country of the Liews.

Muang-Luang-Prabang is the capital city of a Laos province which is perhaps even more extensive than Cheung Mai. The population of the city has been variously estimated. My companion on the tour agrees with me in placing the figure at twenty or twenty-five thousand. It is probably the third largest city in the kingdom of Siam or tributary to it. Ayuthia is the second, and Cheung Mai probably the fourth. While the city itself contains a larger population than Cheung Mai, it has not, like this, a large rural population in its immediate vicinity. It is situated on the east bank of the Cambodia, on a plain which is not more than four or five miles wide. A few miles above and below the city the plain is bounded by high mountains, which reach to the river and form its banks. A small river, the Ma-Kahn, comes in from the east and divides the city into two unequal portions. The plain immediately back of the city is not cultivated nor inhabited. We were told that there were a number of villages on the banks of the Ma-Kahn. During the season of high water boats ascend this stream—a month's journey. I presume it is then the highway on which the Kamoos bring their produce to the Muang-Luang-Prabang market. The city is more compact than any of the Laos cities which we visited. Its market is not so large as that in Cheung Mai, but we found in it, besides the fruits and vegetables of the country, many articles, especially cloths, of foreign manufacture. These are brought from Bangkok. The meats in the market are fish, pork and fowls. The former are abundant; many of them, taken from the Cambodia River, would weigh over a hundred pounds each.

Different Tribes.

The Laos of Muang-Luang-Prabang differ somewhat from those of Cheung Mai. That province and Wieng-Chun are the provinces of the "Eastern" (or "White") Laos—the four cities or provinces of Nan, Praa, Lakawn and Lampoon, of the "Northern" (or "Black")

Laos. The difference bearing upon missionary work is that of language. Our Cheung Mai escort experienced nearly the same difficulty in understanding the "Eastern" Laos that a Siamese would have. The Eastern Laos dialect is more nearly allied to the Siamese than is the Northern. It does not occupy a middle position between the dialect of Cheung Mai and that of Siam, but probably bears a relation to the Siamese and Cochin Chinese languages, as the Northern Laos dialect does to the Siamese, Burmese, Karens, Liew (or Lew) and Chinese tongues. The Eastern Laos understand the spoken language of Siam better than they do that of the Northern Laos. The differences between the Siamese, Northern and Eastern Laos, Liews, Ngieus, Yongs, etc. is illustrated in the dialectic differences of our own language as spoken in the different parts of England.

The letters used in writing the language of this province are universally used throughout the Northern Laos provinces and by the Liews, Yongs and in many of the Burmese provinces. The written characters of the Eastern Laos are not much different from these. The books of either people can be read by the other, though not without a little difficulty. Siamese books cannot be read in any of the Laos provinces, except by a few persons. Thus, the Bible printed in the Cheung Mai Laos letters could easily be read in all the "Northern" Laos, and in many of the Eastern Burmese, provinces and among independent tribes of Liews, etc., and with but little difficulty by the Eastern Laos.

The Liews are comparatively numerous in Muang-Luang-Prabang. Their province lies to the north of it, and joins the southern border of Western China. They are an independent, bold, hardy and cruel people. They dress better than the Laos, the style of their clothing resembling that of the Chinese. Their traders visit the Laos, Burmese and Chinese provinces. Their principal city is Cheung Hoong, situated (on the Cambodia River) to the north of Muang-Luang-Prabang. They have a finer and more intelligent appearance than the Laos. Their tribe is not so numerous as the Laos.

The Yongs occupy a province south of the Liews. Their principal city is a small one on the Ma-Yong (River), a tributary of the Cambodia, which empties into it above the desolated province of Cheung San. They are also subject, I believe, to the king of Burmah. The above-mentioned tribes of people in many respects resemble the Northern Laos. Except the Ngieus, they have the same written language, and the difference in the spoken language is not great. The Lwoas are another tribe of the same family. Representatives of all these tribes, as well as Burmese, Karens, Siamese, Peguans and Chinese, are found in all the Laos provinces. Those most numerous in Muang-Luang-Prabang are the Liews.

The religion of all the peoples before-mentioned, except the Karens and the Kamoos, is Buddhism, more or less mixed with Shamanism.

The Karens, Red Karens, Kamoos and Kamates are not Buddhists, but worship or believe in evil spirits, to whose influence they attribute all that is averse to their sense of good, and whose evil power they must arrest by ceremonies and sacrifices. Thus the Kamoos in cases of sickness do not give medicine, but offer sacrifices to appease the spirits, sometimes killing ten or twelve animals over a single patient.

The Kamoos and Kamates are so nearly related that I will speak of them as one tribe. I have purposely omitted mentioning them in connection with the other tribes of people found in Muang-Luang-Prabang, because there does not appear to be any similarity betwixt them, either in language, religion or customs. The Kamoos are quite as numerous in Muang-Luang-Prabang as the Laos: I mean in the province, not the city, for they are a mountain-tribe. They have no province of their own, but are slaves, who, though they live among the mountains, must pay their tribute, each man, to his Laos or Siamese master. They are most numerous in the province of Muang-Luang-Prabang, but are found in all the Laos and in some of the Burmese provinces, in the Hau country of China,* and among the independent tribes. They are said to be harmless and honest. They are ignorant and despised, even by the poor, wretched people of this country. Their clothing is even more scanty than that of the almost naked Laos.

Their homes are upon the tops of the mountains, not in the valleys among the mountains, as are the Karen villages. They cultivate small portions of ground, which they are not permitted to call their own. Their diminutive clearings and solitary houses, on or near the top of steep, high mountains, have a singular appearance, surrounded as they are with forest and standing in bold relief against the sky. Many of them, from frequent intercourse with their masters, understand the spoken Laos language, but they have a distinct language of their own. They have no written language. Probably not one in ten thousand of them can read the books of any language. They have a few small villages, but the majority of the people live in isolated homes. They have no city of their own. Missionary efforts to reach that tribe might be made through a native ministry. The superintendence of such a work, should it be attempted, would require a missionary to reside in Muang-Luang-Prabang.

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*This is Yunnan.

We remained six days in that city. It was a season of constant labor to my associate. Many visited us—probably from motives of curiosity—but to all we endeavored to present the gospel message. Drunkenness is a prevailing vice there. Unlike Cheung Mai, the nights are hideous with revelry. Opium is said to be used very freely—more so than in any other Laos city. We did not have that sense of security there that we have felt in all the other Laos cities, and so were glad when, on the 14th of May, we were able to leave on our homeward journey.

In concluding this notice of Muang-Luang-Prabang, I will remark that its usual communication with Bangkok is not by way of Cheung Mai. From Nakawn-Soowun, twelve days above Bangkok, boats ascend the eastern branch of the Menam to near its head-waters. The distance is probably greater than to Cheung Mai. From that head of navigation there is a land-carriage of eight or ten days to the Cambodia River, and then about two weeks' boat-travel against the swift current of that river before reaching Muang-Luang-Prabang. I presume the usual time from Bangkok to Muang-Luang-Prabang cannot be less than three months.

We traveled in boats about sixty miles down the Cambodia, seeing very few villages on the river-bank, except near the city. At Ta Dua we procured elephants for our land-journey;

these were changed at different stages. For two days our course was through a partially-cultivated plain, lying parallel with the river and separated from it by a narrow range of mountains. Passed through six villages, the largest of which probably contained a population of one thousand. Six days more of travel brought us to Muang-Nan. Four of these were consumed in ascending and descending mountains.

Muang-Nan, the chief city of the province of the same name, is a city of about ten thousand inhabitants. It is situated on the Nan River, one of the streams which, by uniting with others, form the eastern branch of the Menam River, where it forks at Nakawn-Soowun. The city of Nan is about on the same latitude with Cheung Mai, and the river on which it is situated is nearly as large as the one which flows past our mission-premises here. Owing to impassable rapids on the Nan River, travel between Nan and Bangkok involves a land-journey by elephants of seven or eight days.

The province of Nan is one of the most populous and important of the Laos provinces. The plain for ten or fifteen miles on every side of the city contains a considerable number of villages. There is evidence in the city and villages of comparative prosperity. The rulers seem more liberal, more desirous of the welfare and prosperity of their people, than in any other Laos province.

The contrast in this respect, between Nan on the one part and Muang-Luang-Prabang and Muang-Praa on the other was great. We were more encouraged to revisit that city than any other. We remained there four days. The lateness of the season and frequency of the rains hastened our departure.

Going south-westerly, we arrived in Muang-Praa on the 4th of June. This city is only four or five days' travel from Muang-Nan, but we were detained on the way in getting a fresh supply of elephants.

Four days south of west from Muang-Praa brought us to Muang-Lakawn. This city is about the same in size as Muang-Nan; population probably nearly ten thousand. It is situated on the Mawang, a river which unites near to Rahang with the Maping, which goes by our doors.

We reached Cheung Mai on the 21st of June, after an absence of sixty-seven days. The tour would be a difficult one to make at any season of the year; it was particularly so at the time we made it. The heavy rains retarded our progress, and rendered it extremely unpleasant both by day and night. Our health, however, was but little affected by these unpleasant experiences, as we escaped with less sickness than did the natives who accompanied us.

CHAPTER XXX.

CHINA TO BRITISH INDIA, VIA CHEUNG MAI.

CHEUNG MAI is one of the five northern Laos provinces belonging to Siam. This northern Laos country is bounded on the north (lat. 20° 20′ N.) by the Shan states, tributary to Independent Burmah; on the north-east by some independent Shan states lying between Laos and Tonquin; on the east by Anam; on the south by Siam. The western boundary is the river Salween, separating the Laos country from British Burmah and Karenee. The extreme distance from north to south is two hundred and twenty miles; from east to west, about four hundred and twenty miles. The entire population of the five Laos provinces tributary to Siam is estimated at about two millions. These two millions are composed of about ten tribes; all of them, however, excepting the remnants of three or four aboriginal tribes inhabiting the mountains, are branches of a common stock, the Lou. Each of these five Lou provinces is a kingdom, the ruler of which is always a native prince, who can, however, exercise authority only after receiving investiture from the king of Siam.

Cheung Mai, reckoning all the territory over which the king of Cheung Mai exercises jurisdiction, is the largest and most populous of the Laos provinces. A recent census of the houses throughout the province of Cheung Mai gave the number of ninety-seven thousand, and the census was not at that time complete; the population of the entire province is not under six hundred thousand.

The city of Cheung Mai (written Zimme on English maps) is the capital, and is reached from Bangkok by boat; the distance is approximately five hundred and fifty miles, and the time required to make the journey in native boats, propelled by men, is usually fifty days.

The isolation of Cheung Mai, the long, tedious and expensive journey required to reach it, and the unwholesome climate, are considered by some sufficient arguments against retaining it as a mission-station. But there are other considerations worthy of attention, which I wish to present.

The population of the city of Cheung Mai is estimated at about twenty-five thousand; the language (with slight and unimportant dialectical differences) is common to all the Laos people; it is the commercial centre of all the Laos provinces to the north and north-east, and also of the Shan provinces to the north. There exists an extensive trade with Bangkok. Stick-lac, hides, horns, ivory, cutch, gum benjamin, are among the principal articles of export; these are exchanged in Bangkok for the products of foreign industry. Trade with Bangkok is necessarily restricted: the cost of transportation is too great to admit of a free expansion, the carrying of one ton of cargo from Bangkok to Cheung Mai costing ordinarily fifty-five dollars. The fluctuation in prices both in Bangkok and Cheung Mai is very considerable; the customary rate of interest is two per cent. a month; the time required for the trader to purchase his cargo in Cheung Mai and go to Bangkok and return and dispose of his merchandise is usually six or seven months. In addition to these unavoidable difficulties, there are other and sometimes greater ones. The fostering care of government is too freely exercised, arbitrary and unjust taxes are levied, and other artificial interferences sufficient, it would seem, to prevent any large investment of capital. It is hoped, however, that a more intelligent policy will prevail. Considerable improvement has been made, many restrictions that formerly existed having been removed, and monopolies are not now so freely granted to favorites. It speaks well for the enterprise and sagacity of the Cheung Mai traders that in spite of all these difficulties they have developed a very considerable exchange market. The present extensive trade is an indication that Cheung Mai is the natural centre of what, when properly developed, will amount to an important commerce. It is not impossible that before many years steamers will run from Bangkok to Cheung Mai. There seems to be no real obstacle in the way of light craft propelled by steam accomplishing the journey in ten or twelve days; the present demand would justify the necessary outlay as a business speculation, and steam navigation would unquestionably develop a much larger trade. Sir Arthur Phayre represents the "Laos traders as industrious, energetic, possessing a marvelous capacity for traveling as petty merchants, and longing for free trade." My own knowledge, after a residence of several years in Cheung Mai, confirms this official statement.

The agricultural richness of the plain is known. The forests of valuable timber clothing the hills and mountains are another source of wealth. A large proportion of the teak-timber shipped from Maulmain comes from the Cheung Mai forests. The mineral resources of this Laos country are varied and extensive; deposits of many of the useful and precious metals are known to exist; iron, copper, zinc, lead, silver, antimony, nickel and gold are found in greater or less abundance. Coal has also been found along the river after heavy rains, and petroleum has also been discovered.

The importance of Cheung Mai is not, however, sufficiently indicated by a statement of the productions and population of the province. Its resources can never be fully developed if it is in the future to remain so cut off from the rest of the world as it always has been. The problem of a direct trade-route, connecting China with the British possessions in India, is at the present time attracting much interest. The route across northern Yunnan, *viâ* Bhamo, into Burmah has been sufficiently investigated to ascertain that for overland commerce to any considerable amount it is impracticable. It remains to discover the best route possible through the Laos country. To one who is aware of the extent of the trade that exists and has been carried on for many generations between Cheung Mai and Yunnan, and of the ready access to Cheung Mai from Maulmain, the discussion of *the possibility of discovering a trade-route* connecting Southwestern China and British Burmah seems superfluous. The caravan of Yunnan traders coming yearly to Cheung Mai clearly demonstrate the existence of *a* trade-route, and this native track is probably available for a much more extensive overland transportation of merchandise than at present exists. The Yunnan caravans bring silk and opium, iron and copper utensils and other articles, which they exchange principally for cotton. This caravan-trade has materially increased within the past few years, though I have been informed that years ago the trade was much more extensive than it is now. The gradual recuperation of Yunnan, consequent upon the restoration of order there, probably explains this recent increase of trade. The fact that a party of ten or twelve men with a caravan of sixty or seventy mules make this journey from Tali in Yunnam *viâ* Cheung Hoong and Cheung Toong, to Cheung Mai, is a sufficient indication of the safety of the route. A caravan of sixty mules will ordinarily carry merchandise to the value of twelve to fifteen thousand dollars, occasionally a larger amount. Most of the Yunnan traders who come to Cheung Mai come from the neighborhood of Tali.

The construction of a railroad from Maulmain, *viâ* Cheung Mai, to some point in South-western Yunnan would probably not encounter any physical obstacles more serious than is usually met with in railroad building. After entering the plain or plateau of Cheung Mai the engineering difficulties would be of little consequence until the mountains of Cheung Hoong were reached; and even there the elevation is not very great and there are no deep gorges, such as are met with on the Bhamo and Manwyne route. It is probable there are no insurmountable barriers on this route, and, judging from the accounts of Cheung Mai and Yunnan traders, there are no serious difficulties to be encountered. Until there is a scientific survey any expression of opinion as to the best track is little more than conjecture. From Cheung Mai to Cheung Rai there are two routes. One explored by McLeod and others, although not adversely reported upon, is certainly a difficult route; I traveled over it in 1880 to Cheung San and found the highest point passed over to be thirty-five hundred feet above the Cheung Mai plain, and the ascent is abrupt.

The second of the two routes mentioned above has never been described; until 1880 this route had never been traveled by a white man. In January of that year I traveled over it, and found it, as I thought, possessed of advantages over the other road. Proceeding from Cheung Mai in a northerly direction, following the course of the Maping River to a point fifty-five miles north of Cheung Mai, thence in a direction east by north-east, at a distance of twenty miles from the Maping River we entered a large and fertile plain lying to the east and south-east of Cheung Rai, and separated from that province only by a low range of hills; traveling through this plain to the Ma-Kok River, and following the course of that river, the journey to Cheung Rai is a very easy one. This plain, situated to the east and south-east of Cheung Rai, although uninhabited at the time I visited it, was in the beginning of Laos history the most populous of all their provinces; ruins of the ancient city which was the capital show that at one time there must have been considerable wealth in the province. The name of this ancient city and now deserted province is Muang Fäng. A colony from Cheung Mai has recently settled in the province. This plain is distant from the Maping River only about twenty miles, and the highest point of the divide is twenty-six hundred feet above Cheung Mai—ascent very gradual. The plain is six hundred feet higher than Cheung Mai.

A railroad from Cheung Mai (supposing connection between Maulmain and Cheung Mai already established), following the route indicated above, would encounter no serious physical difficulties in reaching the present northern boundary of the Siamese Laos territory.

The project of a railroad from Maulmain to Cheung Mai is now under serious contemplation, and an exploring party with this end in view is reported as having left Burmah. But the terminus, instead of at Cheung Mai, should be either at Cheung Rai or Cheung San. Such a road would not be a doubtful experiment. The immense resources of this region, the industry and enterprise, the peaceful and law-abiding disposition, of the Laos people, are sufficient to guarantee its success. Any thorough investigation of the subject will show that the natural and most obvious trade-route connecting British Burmah and South-western China is through the Cheung Mai province.

The only political difficulties in the way of such a route to the boundaries of Yunnan would be met with in the so-called "Independent Shan States" north of Laos. Upper Burmah claims, and fitfully and viciously exercises, a supremacy over these Shan states, but the general condition of these provinces is one of political anarchy. The Burmese policy is to incite one province to make war upon another, and to foment internal disorder by exactions and tyrannies compared to which the most unjust and arbitrary measures in the government of the Siamese provinces are mild. Geographically, these Shan states belong to Siam, and it is to be hoped that the Siamese authority will be extended over all the territory lying between the Ma-Kawng (or Cambodia) River and the Salween up to the Yunnan border. While no one will pretend to claim anything approaching to perfection in the administration of the Siamese provinces, the protection to life and property in them is simply infinitely better than the lawless condition of the provinces claimed by Upper Burmah. Should the Siamese authority be extended to the north (as the indications of the past few years would seem to promise), so as to include all the so-called Independent

Shan states situated between the Cambodia and Salween Rivers, a degree of law and order would prevail, and, protected from the attacks and robberies of each other, these tribes would soon begin to accumulate wealth, for their country is possessed of great resources.

"Protection" and "annexation" constitute a serious bugbear to any scheme of railroad building or canal construction in Siam. If the Siamese and Laos could be convinced that there was no design upon their possessions, they would not be averse to the opening up of their country by railroads. It is difficult to believe that the intellectual and political torpor which has so long characterized Siam is to continue. The conflict between the old and the new is inevitable; the numerical majority is, of course, under the influence of ancestral traditions and inherited beliefs, opposed to all change; but the constant contact with Western ideas must modify this spirit of reverence for what is old simply because it *is* old. Even "far-off Cheung Mai" is, I confidently believe, soon to awaken out of her long sleep, and, no longer dreaming of the past, to advance into the better future.

THE END.

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