

KOREA.

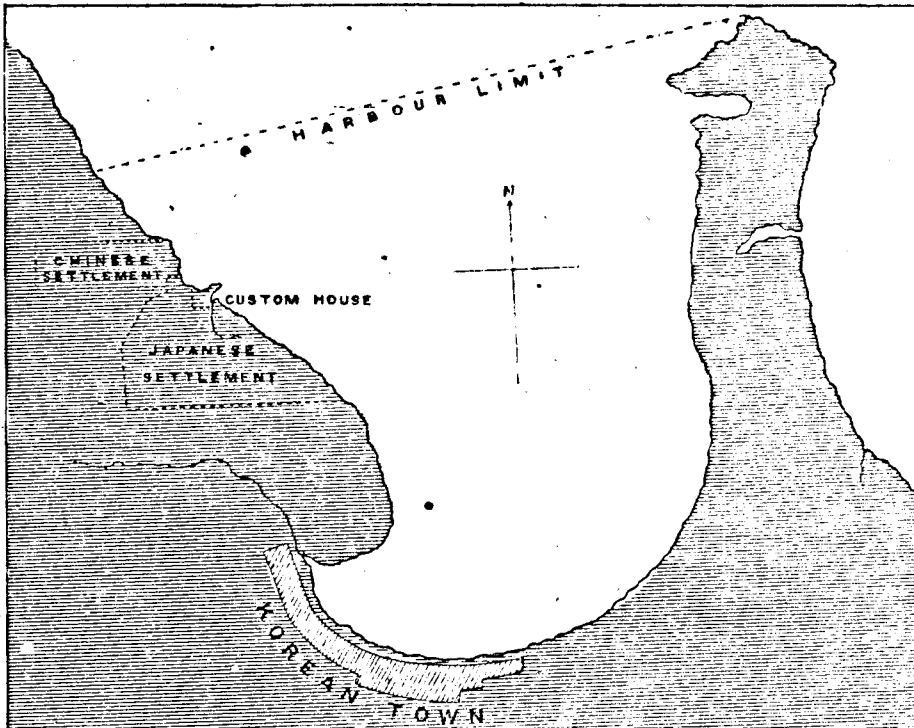
CHAPTER XXI.

ON HORSEBACK ACROSS KOREA.

I TOOK an unusual way to reach the capital of the Hermit Kingdom. The ordinary route is to go by steamer from Nagasaki or Chefoo to Chemulpo, and then walk or be carried in a chair twenty-six miles to Seoul. The steamer which took me from Nagasaki to Vladivostok touched at Wön-san on her way north, so I made arrangements, by the kind help of the Commissioner of Customs, for ponies and men to be ready for me on my return, to make the journey across the peninsula to Seoul, instead of going round by the beaten track. There is a road from the coast to the capital, and a number of Japanese and an occasional Consular officer had travelled it; but at the time of my journey very few other Europeans had crossed the country. The road is of interest at this moment because it was for a long way the route of the third column of the Japanese army to the battle of Phyöng-yang, and Wön-san itself was worth seeing for the sake of its possible future. The Korean authorities discourage travellers, and the Korean Minister at Tokyo persistently declined to give me a passport or to apply to Seoul for one for me, although pressed by the British *chargé* to do so. And the condition of the country may be judged from the fact that four months before my journey marines were landed from the American, Russian, and Japanese men-of-war at Chemulpo, and marched all night up to the capital to protect the foreigners there; while H.M.S. *Leander* got up steam in a hurry and left

Yokohama at a few hours' notice for the same purpose. Some Chinese, it was stated, had entrapped Korean children and sent them to Tientsin for immoral purposes, and the Koreans professed to believe that the missionaries had stolen them to use their eyes for medicine and for taking photographs. Hence murders of Koreans and a threatened attack upon foreigners.

The town and harbour of Wön-san—which is known as Gensan to the Japanese, and Yuensan to the Chinese—are of great



THE SETTLEMENTS AND HARBOUR OF WÖN-SAN.

interest because of the part they are likely to play in the future of the Far East. Broughton Bay, named after Captain William Robert Broughton, the companion of Vancouver, who discovered it in 1797, afterwards losing his ship, the *Providence*, near Formosa, is situated in the middle of the east coast of Korea. The northern arm has been named Port Lazareff by the Russians, whose ships come regularly for manœuvres. It was here that their cruiser, the *Vitiaz*, ran on

a rock in broad daylight and calm weather, on May 10, 1893, and became a total wreck. This bay is the only useful harbour on the whole six hundred miles of coast; but to make up for the deficiency, it is one of the finest harbours in the world. Its area is not far short of forty square miles; it is perfectly sheltered; it is open all the year round; there is excellent anchorage in from six to twelve fathoms; and several streams empty into it, from which excellent water may be obtained. The provinces of which it is the sea outlet are the most mountainous in Korea, and they undoubtedly contain the two most precious of minerals—gold and coal. The former, to the value of half a million dollars annually, has been passed through the Custom House, and probably an equal amount has been smuggled; while deep seams of coal have been observed in several places, and anthracite from the district is burned by foreigners at Wön-san. For game of all kinds the surrounding provinces are a sportsman's paradise. Tigers and sables abound, and wild-fowl of all sorts exist in myriads. And the sea, says the Commissioner of Customs, "literally teems with legions of fish," which the Koreans are too lazy to catch. "The whales, black-fish, sharks, and seals, which abound on the coast, are left to fatten on the multitudes of salmon, cod, *tai*, haddock, whiting, ribbon-fish, herrings, sardines, and innumerable other tribes that crowd the waters at various seasons." With all these natural advantages, Wön-san, in the hands of energetic and intelligent people, would soon become a place of great commercial prosperity and strategic importance.

The port of Wön-san was thrown open to the Japanese in June, 1880, and to the trade of all nations in November, 1883. The settlements there, as shown in the accompanying sketch-map, are the native town, dirty, crowded together, and traversed by filthy alleys in the place of streets; the Japanese settlement, neat and clean and prosperous; and the Chinese quarter, something between the two. The total population is about 15,000. Steam communication is kept up with Vladivostok and Naga-

saki by the excellent Japanese line, the *Nippon Yusen Kaisha*; a Russian steamer, which calls at regular intervals; and one small but very profitable coasting steamer flying the Korean flag. The total tonnage of the port for 1893 was 69,835; the total import and export trade, 1,481,260 dollars; the export of gold, 632,960 dollars, besides 140,000 dollars' worth remitted as taxes on Government account to Seoul; and the net total collection of revenue, 53,089 dollars, say £6,500. A telegraph-line now connects Wön-san with the capital. I give all these details because of my belief, the reasons for which will be found in other chapters, that Wön-san—or, at any rate, some point in Broughton Bay—will ultimately be the Pacific terminus of the Trans-Siberian Railway.

As soon as the *Takachiho* reached Wön-san, I said good-bye to my very pleasant quarters, and went on shore, where through the glass I could see the ponies already waiting. A Korean pony is a small, shaggy, scraggy creature; but you never like him less than when you first set eyes on him; and before I had gone far with these I learned that many virtues were concealed in their little brown bodies. Four ponies and six men were at the landing, the latter being three grooms, two soldiers, and an interpreter. One pony was for me to ride; upon the second were strapped my bag, canvas hold-all, containing rug and sleeping arrangement, camera, and gun; the third was burdened with two boxes of provisions, for it is necessary to carry with you almost everything you need to eat; while the fourth pony had all he could do to transport the money for current expenses—about twenty Mexican dollars, £2 10s. The only Korean currency consists of miserably-made copper, iron, and bronze coins, called “cash” in English, and *sapek* or *sek* in Korean, about the size and weight of an English penny, with a square hole in the middle by which they are strung on plaited straw in lots of five hundred, subdivided by knots into hundreds. Hence the expression “a string of cash.” The pony carried about fifteen thousand of them.



MY START ACROSS KOREA

miles a day. Thirty-five miles from Wön-san, however, north of the overland road, is the great Korean monastery of An-byön, which I was assured was the only interesting place in all Korea. So I determined to lose a day and visit this. I said good-bye to Mr. Creagh about midday, and pushed on fast through the filthy lanes and among the squalling pigs of the native town of Wön-san.

The red shades of evening appeared while we were still jogging along at our best speed. When it was quite dark we reached a little Korean inn, where the grooms had already aroused everybody. Out of a house of apparently two rooms, twenty white-robed travellers turned out and squatted in a row, like tired ghosts, to stare at us. The men were all for stopping—the road ahead was very steep, the woods through which it passed were infested with tigers, the ponies were tired, the monastery would be closed for the night, &c., &c. But I looked at those two rooms and those twenty travellers, and hardened my heart. Then the soldiers, seeing that I was determined, rose to the occasion. One of them shouted to the innkeeper to turn out and bring torches to light us, and his manner, I remarked with interest, was peremptory. The innkeeper demurred in a high tone of voice, when, without another word, this excellent *kisiou* took one step toward him, and whack! with a tremendous slap in the face sent him staggering across the road. The suddenness of the blow took me aback, but nobody seemed in the least surprised or annoyed, and the innkeeper appeared a minute later with a blazing pine-knot and led the way. We left the road at right angles, and fifty yards from the inn we plunged into the woods and began a steep ascent along a narrow stone path. Then a curious thing happened. As soon as our last pony was out of sight, a simultaneous and blood-curdling howl arose from the twenty travellers behind us, and was prolonged with a series of *yah! yah! yah!* till the hills echoed again, and when it ceased our six men similarly exploded, each one putting his back into the yell, till it rivalled the notes

of a Chicago mocking-bird. The travellers howled again, and our men answered, and so on till we could no longer hear the former. "What on earth is the matter?" I asked I Cha Sam. "To keep the tigers away!" he replied. I strapped my revolver outside my thick riding-coat, but if the noise was half as disagreeable to a prowling tiger as it was to me, no wonder he avoided our company, for anything so ingeniously ear-splitting as the sounds our men kept up at intervals of three or four minutes for an hour and a half I never heard.

Meanwhile the road ascended rapidly and the stony path grew narrower, till at last we were climbing a mountain-side. At one moment we were in thick woods, at another a precipice of considerable depth yawned a yard or two to our left, then we were struggling up a stone-heap on to a plateau where half a dozen miserable houses formed a village. No European horse could have made a hundred yards of the road, yet the ponies stepped doggedly over everything, rarely stumbling, and catching themselves again instantly if they fell. I soon learned that the less attempt I made to guide them the safer it was. Before leaving Wön-san Mr. Creagh had said, "If you don't need the soldiers as an escort, you'll find them very useful in other respects." And I soon learned how. The theory of Korean government is that the people exist for the officials. And as I had this escort I was travelling as an official, and therefore entitled to demand any services from the people to speed me on my way. The night was pitch dark, and without torches we could not have gone a yard. Therefore the soldiers levied lights from the people. As soon as they spied a hovel ahead they shouted a couple of words, the man carrying the torch helping lustily. I found later the words were simply *Poul k'ira* ("Bring out fire!"), and no matter how late the hour, how bad the weather, how far to the next house—no matter even though the sole inhabitant was an old woman or a child, the torch of pine-wood or dried millet-stalks bound together must be produced instantly, the guide must hold it flaming in his hand when we reach his door, and woe betide

the unlucky being that keeps Korean officialdom waiting, if it be only for half a minute. Sometimes the stage to the next house was two or three miles, sometimes it was only a couple of hundred yards, but there were no exemptions to this fire-conscription. The general effect as I saw it from the rear was extremely picturesque and striking—the line of ponies with their sideways-swaying loads, the ghostly-white figures of the men on foot, the cries to each other and the animals, the recurring shout for fire, the yell to keep off the tigers, the dense wood, the precipice, the flaming and flashing torch waved ahead or beaten on the ground, dividing everything into blood-red lights and jet-black shadows, and finally the thought that it really was just possible the gleaming eyes of one of the great striped cats might be choosing their victim a few feet away.

Our goal announced itself long beforehand by gate after gate, and the instinctive feeling that we had got to the top, whatever it was. Then the edge of the ravine became paved with stone slabs, and a hundred yards along it brought us to a pair of great wooden doors. They were opened after a little parley, and we found ourselves in a small courtyard, and surrounded by a score of young priests, apparently delighted to see us. The rugs were hastily unpacked, and a brazier was brought. I boiled the kettle, plucked and cooked one of the birds I had shot, and then, while the monks sat round in a laughing, chattering circle, I supped magnificently off broiled duck, hard-tack, and marmalade, washed down by many basins of tea. (Nobody but a traveller knows the real value of tea.) At midnight I was shown to a clean, paper-windowed room about six feet square, and turned in on the floor. And when the morning came it showed how strange and romantic a place I had reached—one of the most striking and picturesque of the unknown corners of the world.

The great monastery in the mountains is one of those chosen and built by a militant Korean sect to serve, according to need, either as a retreat for the spirit or a refuge for the body. The



THE ROYAL APARTMENTS, MONASTERY OF AN-BYÖN.

monks themselves do not look very warlike, but the situation of the monastery is an almost impregnable one. It can be reached by only one road, a long steep stony path, in which "a thousand might well be stopped by three"; behind it on two sides are mountains of rock, and on the fourth it is secluded by a very deep and precipitous ravine through which dashes a noisy torrent. The central buildings, on the edge of the ravine, shown in my photograph, are the sacred apartments of the king, entered by only one attendant, and they are kept in perfect preservation and hourly readiness for his coming. When I woke in the morning I found myself in the midst of great, heavy-eaved temples through the open doors of which could be seen the solemn faces of squatting gilded gods, while already half a dozen priests were bending before the altars with incense and drum.

All the buildings of An-byön are in the style to which the traveller so soon gets used in the East—rectangular wooden structures with high-peaked roofs and richly-carved curving eaves, generally with three doors at one side and the chief idol facing the largest central entrance. Before him are sets of altar utensils and little brass tallow lamps, and joss-sticks which the pious visitor purchases for a few cash and lights at his prayers. The walls are covered with silk and brocade, mostly very old and time-stained; the ceiling is marvellously carved and gilded, perhaps a huge dragon appearing at one end and worming himself in and out of the masses of ornament to the other; and innumerable gongs and drums invite the hand of the too willing pilgrim. The interior of these temples is tawdry, but the massiveness of the wooden architecture, its bright colours, its picturesquely contrived vistas of gate and gable and column and pavilion, taken together with the wonderful natural situation of the place, form an impressive and romantic spectacle. The most curious sight in the monastery, however, is four huge idols of brilliantly painted wood, carved with a good deal of appreciation of the heroic human face and form, which stare at

one another across a narrow passage from behind the bars of two great cages, a pair of war-gods being on one side, and a king and queen (the latter playing a colossal mandolin) on the other. My Japanese vocabulary unfortunately did not permit me to make through my interpreter any inquiries as to their abstract theologic significance. The headgear of the monks beggars description, and I held my sides again and again as a new specimen emerged from the dormitories. Hats of paper, of wood, of bamboo, of horsehair, and of wire; hats round, square, triangular, cylindrical, conical, and spherical; hats like a clothes-basket, like a sieve, like a pumpkin, like a flying crow, like a paper boat, like three three-cornered gridirons fastened together at the edges; half of them affording not the slightest pretence of protection against cold or rain or sun, but being either symbols of sacerdotal rank, or else simply the offspring of a disordered creative imagination. Every priest, too, carried or wore a rosary of red wooden beads, polished like crystal by ceaseless fingering. I told my interpreter to ask one of them by and by privately whether a string of these could be purchased as a souvenir. He, however, blurted out the question to the chief Abbot in the presence of fifty priests, and the hospitable old gentleman instantly took off his own rosary-bracelet of specially big beads and handed it to me, saying, "They cannot be purchased, this is a present." Naturally before leaving I wished to make him some present in return, but ransacking my bag produced nothing whatever suitable. My revolver or knife I could not spare, the old gentleman had already refused to taste whisky, and there appeared to be literally nothing to give him. I recollected, however, that I had had some new silk pocket-handkerchiefs made and embroidered in Japan, and one of these presented with many airs and the explanation from the interpreter that the monogram on the corner was "good foss," satisfied him completely. For our entertainment I left a few dollars in the treasury, the amount, attested by my autograph, being solemnly and elaborately

entered in the great ledger of the monastery, and when at noon I mounted my pony, a hundred of the white-robed, much-hatted priests, led by the venerable Abbot himself, came a little way down the hill to give me good-bye.

It would be absurd to deny that I experienced a new sensation—a “traveller’s thrill”—at this moment. I had never at this time been out of reach of white men before, and now I was at the beginning of a week’s ride across a country which a very few years ago was an utterly unknown and “hermit” land, alone with six men of whom I knew nothing whatever, and with whom I could have communication only through a very difficult language which my “interpreter” knew little better than I did, and with not a white face between me and the Yellow Sea. The new sensation comes, I fancy, from the first consciousness of the fact that all the protective and co-operative machinery of civilisation has temporarily disappeared—that whatever happens one has nothing to count upon but one’s own health, one’s own wits, and if the worst comes, upon one’s own hand. My reflections of this kind, however, were soon interrupted for a consultation. There were two roads, I Cha Sam came up to say, the longer and better one to the left, the much shorter but mountainous one to the right. Which would I take? At this moment my chief desire was to get the trip over as soon as possible, so I promptly chose the latter, and an hour later we were in the first pass.

For three hours we climbed steadily up the narrow pass, and then through it. The road was merely a bridle-path or the dry bed of a mountain stream strewn with stones of all sizes. But the ponies never slipped or even hesitated, and our little train wound along in single file without a moment’s rest till dusk. The *mapous* sang and jodelled, hundreds of magpies flew chattering about us all the time, big mangy old crows hopped alongside, and the rare passers either stopped and stared till I was out of sight, or else looked on the other side and passed pretending not to have seen me. From eleven

o'clock till half-past three it was blazing hot, and my helmet with its two inches of solid pith was none too thick. Then it began rapidly to grow chilly, and long before dusk I had a frieze riding-coat buttoned up to my chin. How these Korean *mapous* and *kisious*—grooms and soldiers—manage to escape pleurisy and consumption I cannot imagine. Positively their only garments are a short loose jacket without any fastening down the front, and a short loose pair of trousers, both of thin white cotton cloth. As the man walked at my pony's head in the evening he shivered till I could hear his teeth chatter, yet less than two hours before he was wet through with perspiration. By six o'clock we had descended somewhat to an extensive plateau, and in the distance we could hear the dogs of a village. As we entered it they ranged themselves in a snapping, yelping band at our heels, and from every low doorway an inhabitant crawled out to look at us. Any one who likes to be conspicuous should go to Korea, for the look of overwhelming, speechless surprise that passed over each face as I came in sight was wonderfully flattering. As a rule, however, the face withdrew immediately, and the door was hastily and silently closed—I suppose lest my official attendants should demand the hospitality which every Korean householder is bound to give.

In the middle of the village—the twenty or thirty miserable thatched dwellings hardly deserve the name—we came to a halt, and I Cha Sam approached. “What is it?” I asked him, and he replied with a single Japanese word, “We will sleep.” I looked at the house before us and my heart sank. True, I knew that Korea did not boast a Palace Hotel, but this was rather too much. A big, tumble-down, badly-thatched hovel surrounding a yard; all round this, stalls for ponies and bullocks; in the middle a huge cesspool surmounted by a dunghill, in which horrible black sows were rooting; opposite to the entrance the two rooms in which the dozen members of the family lived and had their domestic being, and a large guest-chamber on one side for my men, and on the other,

exactly fronting the most fragrant corner of the dunghill, a smaller one for myself. I Cha Sam flung open the door—about two feet by three—and bowed me in. The floor was of hammered earth; the walls were mud, covered in spots with very dirty paper; the material of the ceiling was concealed by the dirt and smoke of generations, and tapestried with spiders' webs. At first, of course, I was highly indignant with Sam for bringing me to such a hole, but from the look of genuine surprise on his handsome placid countenance I soon gathered that this was the regular Korean hotel, and that I had nothing else to expect. Therefore I accepted the inevitable with what joy I could, and with difficulty crowded myself, my bag, rug, and provision-box into the room.

My Korean trip taught me at least two things. First, that our supposed instinctive dislike to being personally dirty is merely a matter of local convention. At home I am as unhappy as another if I cannot get my tub at a moment's notice morning or evening, yet after twenty-four hours of Korea I regarded washing, except just a swish of face and hands, as an artificial virtue, and when I found that there was no clean place anywhere on which to lay my coat if I took it off, I just kept it on. In fact I kept it on for five days. And whether it was the new sensation or the old Adam, I do not know, but by and by I grew rather proud of being distinctly and indisputably dirty. The dunghill, of course, did not come to recommend itself to me as a bedroom balcony, but that, unhappily, was only a speck compared with later experiences which I will not describe. The second thing is that repugnance to certain animals is a foolish weakness which sensible people should immediately abandon. When I left Wön-san I loathed cockroaches. To-day I care no more for a cockroach than for a rabbit. Every room I occupied in Korea was full of them—literally full, hundreds and thousands and tens of thousands. The first night was horrible with them, and sleep was theoretical only; but after that I used to pick them out of my hair and

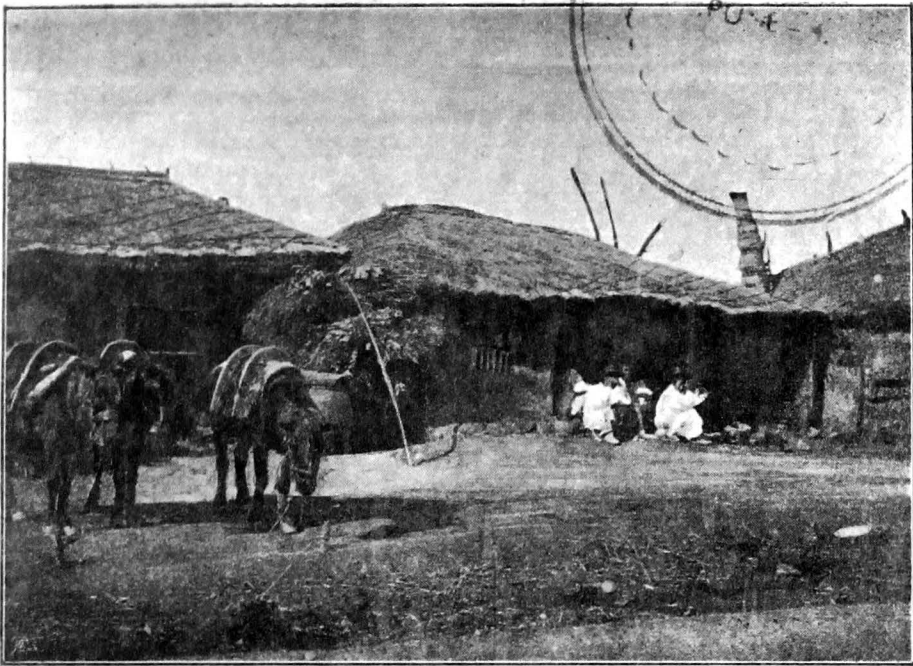
beard, or flick them off my coat like flies. They came to my candle till the floor shone all over from their pretty polished backs, and if I put a sheet of paper on the ground twenty of them would start surveying it before I could begin to sharpen a pencil. My third night in Korea was the only other one wasted. My quarters were even worse, and besides the cockroaches there was an army of rats. They ran over my feet the moment my candle was out, they ran over my body, they crunched at my sugar, they scampered over my bag, till at last I gave in, lighted the candle again, and read all night. As my only book was *The Newcomes* it was a night well spent. Every Korean *choumak* or inn was as I have described, sometimes a little better, once or twice very much worse. In this respect I should probably have fared better if I had chosen the longer and more travelled road.

The people of the country varied very much. Two villages out of three were very friendly, highly inquisitive, and easily moved to laughter. The third was generally sullen, and its inhabitants would not come near me, would not reply to the greeting of the country—" *Oual keuiounni eutesio?* " ("How is your health to-day?")—and would not even return a friendly nod. More than half the time I walked, and my chief amusement was to get a mile or two ahead of my caravan and enter a village by myself, walk into the middle of it, and seat myself calmly on somebody's doorstep as if I were perfectly at home. The stupefaction of the natives was delicious. Probably they had never seen a white man before, for very few had ever crossed Korea, and these generally by the longer and better route. First they would stare from a long distance, then they would drive off the dogs, then some patriarch would approach cautiously and hazard a question. I would reply with a few lines from "Hamlet" or "Paradise Lost," whereupon they would all laugh. Then one would remove his long pipe from his mouth and offer it to me, and though the courtesy was neither accepted nor returned, it sufficed to break the ice. Invariably they would begin by feeling

my clothes, and the different textures of these filled them—knowing nothing but the calico which is their sole wear—with infinite amazement. Especially the corduroy of my riding-breeches pleased them, and they would send to the other end of the village for an old man to come and feel it. Then if they were amiable I would give them a little entertainment, consisting of opening my watch-case by blowing on it, turning out my pockets for their inspection, doing a few tricks with coins, making cat's cradles with string, striking matches, and other such infantile performances, firing my revolver as a grand finale. Childish and ignorant in the extreme they were, knowing less of the outside world than a Digger Indian. Poor, too, beyond telling. I believe that ten dollars would have bought everything (except the crops) that I saw exposed for sale in hundreds of shops from the time I left Wön-san till I struck Seoul. The men were well-built, as a rule, and fairly well-featured; but I did not see a single woman or girl during my trip who could have been called even moderately good-looking. The daily labour in the fields or at the millet-mill is too hard for that, and the women are even more beasts of burden than the men. One or two men I saw most horribly diseased with some kind of scabby elephantiasis, and one of these bothered me not a little by coming and poking his head over my shoulder while I was taking photographs. Only twice was there the least sign of hostility. Once in the middle of the night some sneak-thieves came to my room, but I happened to be lying awake smoking in the dark, and heard them coming. So when with great stealth they had got the door half-open, I struck a match, when they shut it with a bang and scuttled like rats. On the other occasion I started out to investigate a big village in the dark, and finally got surrounded by a rather unpleasant and unfriendly crowd, who were gradually edging me along the street in the direction I did not want to go. But luckily I Cha Sam had discovered my absence and set out to look for me, and his commanding tongue soon put matters straight. During the

first two days I was greatly annoyed by my *mapous*, whom I could not get along at all. At the midday halt they would lie about for a couple of hours, and in the morning it was two or three hours after I was up before I could get them to start. On the third morning I lost my temper, and going into their room I kicked them one after the other into the yard. This was evidently what they expected, for they set to work immediately. Unless they were kicked they could not believe the hurry was real. Afterwards, by a similar procedure, I started whenever I wished. At first, in the evenings I tried to learn something by inviting the innkeeper and an old inhabitant or two, with the interpreter, into my room, and regaling them with weak whisky and water and dry biscuits. But they expressed their appreciation in the native manner by such horrible eructations, and would "spit refreshingly around," as Pendennis says, to such an extent that I was compelled to decline to receive callers. My official *kisious* were of little use, and as lazy as lobsters. My camera was injured by being jolted on pony-back, so I told one of these that I would give him a dollar—a fortnight's wages—if he would bring it safe to Seoul for me. He jumped at the offer, carried it for about a mile, then stopped at a house and shouted the magic words "*Cha'm chim neira!*" ("Carry a parcel a stage!"). The householder hastened to obey, for, as I have explained, any official (as I was because of my escort) has a right to demand any such service of the people. This process was repeated every few miles, and so my camera was borne by hand across the Hermit Kingdom from sea to sea, with the tall soldier convoying it in the rear.

As regards the country itself it was far more fertile in appearance, and also much more cultivated, than I had been led to expect. After leaving the monastery we climbed till evening, then slept in a flat valley, then climbed again through a succession of narrow, rocky, and difficult passes till we reached an extensive plateau or table-land, 2,500 feet above the sea, stretching between two fine mountain-ranges, and perlaps forty



A KOREAN HOTEL.



MEN AND WOMEN OF KOREA.

miles in length. The mountains were splendid in their autumn tints, the air was superb, the weather perfect, and I had not a lonely moment. In fact, I seldom passed pleasanter days than four of those spent riding or walking in utter solitude in Central Korea. The nights were all bad, and at that time I used to wonder what real travellers think about during the lonely hour between dinner and sleep, when instead of being a hundred miles from a white face they are a thousand, when instead of a day or two dividing them from civilisation they must be alone for months and years, and when the revolver under their hand day and night is there from necessity and not from nerves. I am inclined to think we do not quite appreciate them as we ought. For my own part, I used to reflect how good it would be to sit again in the midst of the old faces in the club, or to drop into a stall at the Lyceum, or to listen once more to "Qu'allez vous faire si loin de nous?" But I wander. To hark back, therefore, the chief crops grown in the interior of Korea are rice, millet, beans, and red peppers, the second of these much predominating and furnishing the staple food for the people. So far as appearances tell anything to an inexperienced eye, Korea ought to be rich in minerals, and there is certainly plenty of land which would give fair if not great returns for cultivating. The village industries were few and far between—a little spinning and a little primitive weaving of cotton cloth. The country is miserably poor at present, for nobody cultivates much more than will support him, as the only outlet for the surplus, and that an unavoidable one, is into the pocket of the nearest official.

My last day's journey of sixteen hours brought me to the great gate of Seoul at eight o'clock. This was my first glimpse of the East of my imagination—the rocky ascent, the towering battlemented walls, the huge black gates inexorably closed. Neither persuasion nor money could open them, as the keys of the colossal padlocks were with the King's guard at the palace. So rather than return five miles to a *choumak*, I rolled myself

up under my rug, and slept there on a big stone all night; and when morning broke, and the countrymen coming to market lifted the corner of the rug and saw what was underneath, they were not a little astonished. Then at daylight we rode into the city, and Mr. Colin Ford, Her Majesty's most hospitable Consul, met me at his gate in gorgeous pyjamas, and extended the bath and the breakfast and the welcome of civilisation to a particularly dirty traveller.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE CITY OF SEOUL AND ITS INHABITANTS.

IT is the City of Ichabod. A few years ago—a few, that is, in the life of a city—Korea was educating the Japanese people in the arts: Satsuma ware was born in Seoul. To-day there is not a piece of porcelain to be bought in the city worth carrying away. A few years ago it took an army of 130,000 men under the greatest general Japan has ever had, to conquer the country. Yesterday the advent of thirty American marines threw 250,000 Koreans into a panic. To-day two alien nations are fighting for Korea on her own soil, and she is unable to lift a finger to help, or oppose either of them. I visited one of the old palaces. Pushing the door open to enter, I almost pushed it off its hinges; the spacious entrance-terrace is a mulberry orchard; grass grows in the stables; the throne on which the King sat to receive his ministers is black with mildew; the splendid carvings are rotting from the lofty roofs; not a soul sets foot in these deserted halls. Oddest of all, as I stood in silence by the great pillars of the throne-room, a dove cooed from her nest in one of the carven capitals. It was the vision of Omar Khayyam:—

“ The palace that to heaven its columns threw,
And kings the forehead on its threshold drew,
I saw the solitary ring-dove there,
And ‘ Coo, coo, coo,’ she cried, and ‘ Coo, coo, coo.’ ”

The word Seoul (pronounced variously *Sool*, *Sowl*, and *Say-ool*, and erroneously marked on many maps as *Kinkitau*, the name

of the province) merely means "Capital," the proper name of the city being Han-yang, "the fortress on the Han." It is a city of about 250,000 people. It is surrounded by a more or less dilapidated wall, pierced by several imposing gateways, all of which are closed at sunset at the sound of a great bell, and the keys placed for the night in charge of the King's guard at the palace. On one side of the city a second wall encloses the palace and the royal domain, and from the farthest point of this a stony mountain rises abruptly and symmetrically to a sharp peak. The city is surrounded by mountains, and lies like the palm of one's hand when the fingers are turned upwards; but this one, Nam-san, is the highest, and every night about eight o'clock a beacon blazes for a few minutes from its summit. On some hill-top of the west coast, if order reigns, a signal-fire is lighted after sunset every day. Another hill-top further north repeats it if all is quiet there too, and so from mountain to mountain the bonfires travel round the Hermit Land—along the shore of the Yellow Sea, across the frontier of Manchuria, by Russian Tartary, down the Sea of Japan, coasting the Korean Strait, up the Yellow Sea again, and inland to the capital, till at last the sudden blaze upon Nam-san, almost in the royal gardens, tells his anxious Majesty that one more day throughout his kingdom has passed in peace. The telegraph, however, is fast putting an end to this picturesque custom.

Seoul is twenty-six miles by road from the port of Chemulpo, but fifty-five by the winding river Han. The latter could undoubtedly be rendered serviceable for regular water-traffic to and from the capital, which it approaches within about three miles, at a place called Mapu, but at present it is navigated only by native junks, to whose owners time is of no importance, and an occasional steam-launch which is often aground during half the time of its trips. Chemulpo—known to the Japanese as Jinsan, and to us officially as Jenchuan—is a flourishing place, with a good many excellent modern buildings

and an energetic commercial population, among whom the Japanese are pre-eminent both in numbers and in enterprise. In 1882, when the port was opened to foreign trade, Chemulpo was a handful of mud huts. Now its four settlements—foreign, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean—are well built, well lighted, and have good roads. And they are so crowded that land is rising to a high price. Its population, formerly a few fishermen, has risen to about 7,000, of whom Europeans and Americans number about 30, Japanese 2,500, Chinese 670, and Koreans 4,000. The general foreign settlement is under the control of a Municipal Council, composed of the Consuls, a Korean official, and three representatives of the landholders. The outer harbour affords abundant and safe anchorage, but the inner harbour is small and silting up, and as the tides rise and fall about thirty feet there is a vast mud flat at low water. Chemulpo is connected with the capital by telegraph, and there is a daily courier service, under the control of the Customs Service. The latter is a branch of the Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs, and is conducted in an ideal manner. In 1893 a Chinese "Mutual Transport Company" was formed, for the improvement and communication with the capital and the development of trade on the Han. The trade of Chemulpo for 1893 was not up to the average, owing to droughts and political disturbances, but its figures, considering what Chemulpo was fourteen years ago, are a striking proof of the possibilities of Korea with energetic merchants and honest administration. The exports are gold, rice, beans, and hides. The first-named was exported to the amount of 201,846 dollars. The total exports reached 866,495 dollars, as against an average of nearly a million and a half for the three preceding years; and the total imports 2,421,133 dollars. The balance against Korea is supposed to be made up by the export of smuggled gold. The shipping entered and cleared at the port during 1893 was 490,981 tons, of which 159,626 tons was Japanese, 50,434 Korean, and 28,809 Chinese. The British flag did not put in an appearance, but it is estimated

by the Customs that 54 per cent. of the foreign import trade is British in origin, 24 per cent. Japanese, 13 per cent. Chinese, and 9 per cent. German, American, French, and Russian put together. As I have said, the development of Chemulpo is an interesting and important index to the potential development of Korea generally under a reformed administration.

Seoul has two wide streets, and two only. For a quarter of a mile in front of the palace and then at a right angle for a mile or so, there is a fine well-kept road fifty yards wide, while everywhere else in the city the average width is probably about twelve feet. Almost all are traversed by an unsavoury gutter, sometimes down the middle, sometimes at the sides, while every now and then you cross a kind of canal-sewer, a lingering shallow stream of water, refuse, and filth. Needless to add, therefore, that the atmosphere of Seoul is very offensive to the nostrils. The houses are built of wood and paper, and all thatched, for it is forbidden for anybody except an official to cover himself with a tiled roof. The shops are segregated in streets according to their wares. Thus, the grain-market is in the wide street, and for half a mile this is covered with broad shallow baskets full of rice, millet, beans, and many other seeds, among which the merchants and their customers walk and talk. The cabinet-makers occupy a whole street, the secondhand dealers another, the dealers in piece-goods have a row of warehouses, the gold- and silver-smiths live along the canal, and so on. But there is nothing whatever for a stranger to buy. I went to a score of cabinet-makers' shops to purchase one of the curious little cabinets, but the most expensive one I could find cost only two dollars, and that was not worth carrying home. Nothing of gold or silver is made except to order; the embroidery is shoddy; the paintings are ghastly; the carving is beneath contempt. The glory has departed.

A street full of Koreans suggests the orthodox notion of the resurrection. Everybody is in white robes, and even though a man has only one suit in the world, it is clean. When he goes



A GATE OF SEOUL.

home at night, if he belongs to this poor class, he retires to bed and his wife washes and pommels his clothes. I say "pommels," for ironing is an unknown art in Korea. After being washed the calico is stretched on a wooden block, and then with a flat block of wood in each hand the woman pounds it for hours. After sunset all Seoul rings with the dactylic tap-tap, tap-tap-tap of these domestic voices of the night, as with the incessant cry of a million strident insects. The dress of the women is extraordinary, and certainly, to adapt Dr. Johnson, they must have been at infinite pains to invent it, for by nature no one could be such a fool. The upper garment consists of sleeves and an apology for the body of a jacket about six inches deep and reaching therefore about three inches below the arm-pits. The skirt is a great baggy petticoat attached to a broad waistband which begins about six inches below where the jacket ends. Between the two there is nothing—nothing, that is to say, except six inches of dirty brown skin, just those parts of the body being exposed which all other women in the world prefer to conceal. The effect is disgusting. Moreover, as if to emphasise this ludicrous exhibition, these very women are most particular to hide their faces from any man. The theory is that a male Korean always looks the other way, but the moment a foreigner comes in sight they hastily draw over their faces the folds of the light cloak worn hanging from the head. It is a pity they have not fairy godmothers to supply them all with invisible caps. Seoul would be the more attractive. The Korean men, on the other hand, are fine fellows, tall, well-built, graceful, dignified, generally possessing regular features. They all have, too, a well-fed look, although the standard of physical living is about as low as is possible. Poverty reigns in Seoul—extreme, universal, and hopeless. And the explanation is to be found in one elegant word—*nyangpan*, of whom more hereafter. The *nyangpan* is the official, from the Prime Minister to the lowest hanger-on of the palace. All Korean society consists of two classes, those who are *nyangpans* and those who are not.

All work is done by the latter, and the problem of the former is how to get most of the product of it with least trouble. By taxes, by enforced bribes, threats, by "squeezes," in short by every known or discoverable form of extortion, the *nyangpan* makes the other support him. Consequently the other takes good care not to earn a cash more than will keep the life in his own body and enable him just to hold the *nyangpan* at arm's length. Hence, by an obvious chain of causation, the utter rottenness and inertness and stagnation of Korean society. Any proposed change for the better has against it the whole *nyangpan* tribe, that is, everybody in Korea above the hewers of wood and drawers of water. And the people themselves have fallen below the stage at which they could initiate the sole step that would save them—"swift revolution, changing depth with height." Is there, then, any hope for Korea? Only from outside—that is, under present circumstances, from Japan.

In considering the present and the prospects of Korea, one is confronted with the striking discrepancy between the excellent possibilities of the people themselves, and the almost unimaginable sloth and degradation in which they are content to exist. All observers lay emphasis upon the natural capacities of the inhabitants. "The Koreans are undoubtedly a fine race. The men are stalwart and straight, proud and independent; they possess intelligent and expressive faces, small feet and hands, and are even-tempered, except when excited by drink—not an uncommon condition."* Yet under the native *régime* their character is as degenerate as that of a Bushman. They are totally devoid of ambition or even the elements of personal or commercial success. "The average Korean takes life as easily as he possibly can. Does he till the soil, a mere tickling of the surface at seed-time, an occasional weeding at remote intervals, and a happy-go-lucky mode of garnering, constitute all the assistance he feels called upon to render a bountiful nature; he lets an ample water supply run to waste,

* Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs, Mr. Hunt's Report for Fusan, 1891.

regardless of periodical droughts; and he reckes but little of ditching or drainage, but allows the heavy summer rains to gather foot-high on the standing crops. Is he a trader, he places his business in the hands of a professional middleman, who, in turn, passes it on to his satellites; days, or weeks, perhaps, are wasted, with sublime unconcern, in bickering for a trumpery object or a trivial advantage, while his profits are absorbed in the social entertainment he receives and in exorbitant brokerage. Is he a fisherman, he is generally heedless of the magnificent hauls that could be made by venturing upon the sea, and remains content with such fish as will run into crudely and easily constructed traps set out along the shore, which only require attention for an hour or so each day. Does he labour for daily wage, and extra pay is given in busy times, a sense of burdensome wealth will speedily overcome him, and make him decline remunerative work, except at his own fanciful terms, until the 'bonanza' of extra earnings is exhausted and the pinch of necessity drives him; then, however, it must be admitted, he falls to again cheerfully enough." *

In further elucidation of this point I may add an explanation of the foregoing from the same dispassionate source, which will carry more weight than could attach to my own much briefer and more restricted observation of the same facts. "The buildings and walls of the different cities in the province present a poverty-stricken aspect, and the Yamens in all the towns are in a state of extreme dilapidation. The poverty does not reach the stage of actual distress, but has rather the appearance of a curtailment or suppression of every want beyond the bare necessity of keeping body and soul together. The rapacity and cruelty of the officials are not conducive to the accumulation of wealth. All stimulus or inducement to increase his possessions and give himself comforts is denied the middle-class Korean; for he is not allowed to enjoy the results of his labour and industry,

* Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs, Mr. Oiesen's Report for Yuensan, 1891.

never feeling sure that the little property he may have (or even his life) is safe from official despotism, and consequently the people have become dispirited and indifferent. Safety and security are found in obscurity only." * Hence the saying, "Given a good meal and a hot floor, and a Korean holds Paradise cheap." This is Korea after centuries of vassalage to China. As for the cruelty and barbarism with which the law—or the absence of it—is enforced, the vassal has even surpassed the sovereign. Secret official assassination is the accepted way of settling a political difficulty or removing a troublesome Minister. When the body of the murdered Kim-Ok-kyun (whose story will be found in the following chapter) was brought back to Seoul, this was the treatment meted out to it: "The corpse was laid flat on the ground face downwards, the head and the four limbs being supported on blocks of wood to facilitate the process of cutting them off. The head was first severed from the trunk by the tedious process of sawing. The right hand was then cut off at the wrist, while the left arm was severed midway between the wrist and the elbow. The feet were chopped off at the ankles. Last of all, the back of the trunk was hacked at regular intervals with three lateral cuts, seven inches long and one inch deep. The head was suspended from a tripod made of old bamboo sticks tied together with rough straw ropes, and the hands and feet, joined in a bundle, were hung by the side of the head, the trunk with the three lateral cuts being left on the ground just as it had been placed for mutilation. The process was carried out in a barley-field by the riverside at Yokkaichi. Originally it was understood that the mutilated corpse would be exposed for a space of about a fortnight, but the disgusting business came to an end sooner. The trunk was then thrown into the river, while the head was salted and sent to Chiku-san in Keiki-do, to be subsequently exposed throughout the length and breadth of the peninsula, and finally brought back to Chiku-san

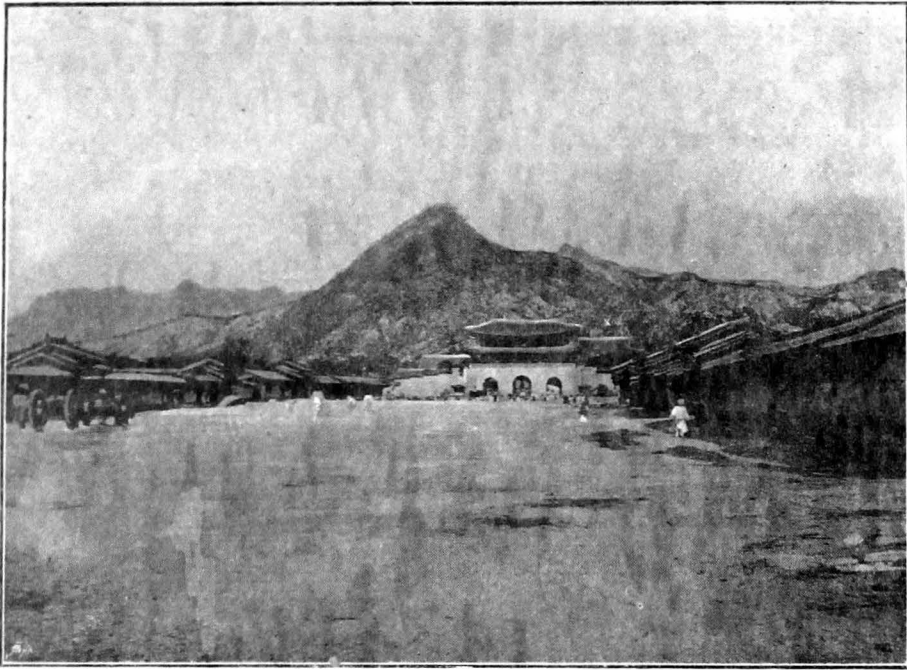
* Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs, Mr. Hunt's Report for Fusan, 1891.

and there cast away to become the prey of vultures. As to the hands and feet, it is stated that one hand and foot of either side were salted and sent to Kankyo and Keisho-do." Kim's widow and daughter, who had been living in poverty as washerwomen, were brought to Seoul at the same time, and with his father, an old blind man, were beheaded. The following royal decree placarded on the walls of Seoul also throws light on the condition of the country and the character of the throne: "Considering that the choice of candidates for the harem of the Korean Prince Royal will take place on 19th inst., the Government interdicts throughout the kingdom up to that date marriages between Koreans."

As a further concrete illustration of the social condition of Korea, take an event which occurred a week before my visit. There is a guild or secret society of the *colporteurs* of Korea, having wealthy merchants in the capital for its apex, and the army of itinerant peddlers traversing the country in all directions for its base. It was discovered or suspected at the palace that a conspiracy threatening the throne was hatching among the members of this guild. Therefore one afternoon six of the most prominent members, rich merchants, were seized, thrown into prison—the barracks either contain or constitute the prison—and the same evening, when the general in command found leisure or energy to attend to the matter, the unlucky six were quietly strangled. There is "no infernal nonsense" about trial or conviction or sentence in the "Land of the Morning Calm." So much for law. Politics is on the same level. I had three letters of introduction to Korean statesmen. One was dead, the second was in banishment at Hongkong, the third sent me his card with a polite message that he had just been appointed Prime Minister, and *therefore* could no longer talk about politics! And another little illuminating fact is that when a Korean statesman is banished or executed for political trespasses, his wife and daughters and all his womankind are taken and attached as a sort of permanent

staff of prostitutes to one of the departments of State for the use of the Minister and his assistants.

The country has been believed by every traveller to possess great mineral resources, besides its undoubted gold-mines, but every attempt to develop these has come to utter failure, through native corruption and indifference. Mint, post-office, match-factory, sericulture, mining—all of these have been introduced with a flourish of trumpets, to collapse miserably within a short time. If it had not been for the Japanese, Korea would still be the Hermit Kingdom, without a trace of trade or the possibility of improvement. One thing only has saved it from being annexed by anybody who chose—the fact that it stands at the focus of the geography of the Far Eastern question, too important to Great Britain, Russia, Japan, and China for one of these to encroach upon it without arousing the opposition of the other three. Most Korean affairs are conducted with a pomposity and a grandiloquence only equalled by their insignificance. Since the country was opened to foreign intercourse, for example, a Foreign Office, among other administrative institutions, has been created. It consists of a President, two Vice-Presidents, a Councillor, and twenty-two clerks. For futility it can only be compared with the scenes and personages of a Gilbert and Sullivan opera, yet it enforces respect by the appalling name of *T'ong-ni-kio-syep-t'ong-sang-sa-mu-a-mun*. The Korean navy consists of half a dozen "Admirals," who know no more about a ship than a Hindu knows about skates—indeed, how should they, since there is no Korean ship for them to know? And the Korean army is almost equally non-existent. There are a few thousand soldiers, under the professed supervision of two American instructors, called respectively Vice-President and Councillor of the Board of War, but no account need be taken of them. Two regiments were drilled for my inspection, and a very amusing sight it was—a sort of cross between Swedish gymnastics and the soldiers of Drury Lane pantomime. An eye-



THE OLD PALACE AND NAM-SAN, SEOUL.



THE CONSUL GOING TO AN AUDIENCE, SEOUL.

witness has just written that a number of newly-raised "naval soldiers" were armed with muskets without locks! As has been seen, Korea has played no part whatever in the struggle that is being waged on her own soil, with her own future for the stake. Lower than this no people could sink.

Before I left Seoul I had the honour of an audience with his Majesty the King, the British Consul-General presenting me. We were received at the palace at three o'clock by half a dozen Vice-presidents of the Foreign Office, in a small detached wooden building where we sat for a quarter of an hour drinking champagne over a green baize table, seated on ordinary foreign chairs, and with gimcrack brass electric-light fittings over our heads. Then an officer came for us, and in solemn single file we proceeded through the grounds and yards to the central open pavilion where alone the King holds audience, first the official court interpreter, Mr. Kim, a Korean nobleman, as no one of lower rank is admitted to the presence of the sovereign, then the Consul, then myself, and more officials in broad-winged hats and gorgeous purple robes bringing up the rear. As soon as we came in sight of the King an official left his Majesty's side and instructed us in a loud voice in the method of our approach—left turn, ten steps, right turn, ten steps, bow, up two steps, bow, up two more steps, right turn, five steps, and bow—all of which brought us face to face with the King across a small square table. Mr. Kim assumed a crouching position from the first moment, like a sportsman stalking a covey from behind a hedge, and never quitted it till we were out of the royal sight again. The first thing that caught my eye was a three-and-sixpenny English hearthrug of glaring red and green, which formed the cover of his Majesty's reception table. The second thing was that our noble interpreter was so overcome by finding himself in the presence that his English took wings and he could scarcely articulate. The King is a little man, dressed in handsome dark red silk, richly embroidered with gold, and wearing a pot-hat of similar material. His hands he kept hidden in his

voluminous sleeves. His face is pale but very pleasing, brimming over with good nature, and each of his questions he chattered out with a rippling nervous laugh like a girl's. And every time he laughed we could see a large yellow bead of something he was chewing. On each side of him stood a big solemn-faced minister suggesting from time to time a word or a proper inquiry. Poor Mr. Kim, however, was a broken reed. The King asked something with a merry laugh. After a short pause a faint and shuddering gurgle emerged from beneath Mr. Kim's low bent head. "What does he say?" asked the Consul of me (I was standing between them) behind his hand. "I give it up," I returned. "I thank his Majesty," said the Consul, taking the bull by the horns, "for the honour of this audience." The King laughed again, as if it were an excellent joke, and asked something else. This time I nudged Mr. Kim and listened intently. Slowly in an awe-stricken tone the words came, "His Majesty hopes your King is quite well." The Consul looked at me beseechingly, and I whispered, "Hopes your King's quite well," trying to keep a straight face. "I thank his Majesty," replied the Consul boldly, thinking he was now on safe ground, and not having caught my words: "I am quite well." This time when his Majesty laughed, we both laughed with him. And so on, over the usual routine questions for a quarter of an hour, when the King graciously expressed his good wishes for my journey and we retired, carrying away the impression of a capital little fellow, rather in awe of his own big ministers. Afterwards, with similar formalities, I was presented to the Crown Prince, a flabby-faced youth of about nineteen, bloated with dissipation, turning helplessly to two horrible eunuchs who stood beside him for what he should say to us, bobbing up and down in his pitiable physical nervousness—altogether a dreadful spectacle, suggestive of the society of Gomorrah.

The foreign community at Seoul consists of about a score people, excluding Japanese, of whom there is a long street of merchants and artisans. A good many missionaries still stay

in Seoul, although, I believe, they are still forbidden to preach; and one only, an excellent doctor, is permitted to practise, in charge of a free hospital and any number of daily out-patients. The little community manages with difficulty to amuse itself, and from time to time a threatened attack forms a welcome break in the monotony of its life. For example, a few weeks before my visit, there was a passing scare. All the Chinese servants left, simply saying that the foreigners were to be killed, and they dare not stay; arms were brought out and cleaned and loaded; the Russian Legation was prepared for a siege, and everybody was ready to rendezvous there at a signal of three rifle-shots, and a rocket, if at night. Thirty American marines, however, marched up one night; a number of Russians followed, and although upwards of twenty Koreans were butchered in the streets by their compatriots, no foreigner was disturbed. But the beacon did not blaze from Nam-san that night.

It would be easy to fill pages with descriptions of the queer scenes and circumstances of Korean life. I will mention only a few, as specimens. A remarkable figure frequently met in the street is the mourner. He is dressed in rough material—almost sackcloth; on his head is a hat of colossal dimensions—perhaps four feet in diameter, within which his head almost disappears; what is left of his face is hidden by a fan made of a piece of sacking stretched between two sticks, over the top of which he peeps to find his way. Another interesting fact is that the ox-slaughterer is the lowest man in the social scale—an obvious relic of Buddhism—while next above him come the pork-butcher and the prostitute.* Korea, which is modelled in most respects upon China, has a theoretical system of competitive examination for office. In fact, however, the system is as corrupt as everything else Korean. A picturesque and curious ceremony is this. A successful candidate is introduced by his friends to one of the examiners, who, amid much laughter, buffets him about, tears his clothes, breaks his hat, daubs his

* Ross.

face with ink, and sprinkles powdered white soap over his moist countenance. He is then led away home, washed and dressed in holiday attire, and receives congratulations for the rest of the day.

As I happen to be much interested in the art of dancing I took occasion to see and photograph the votaries of Terpsichore in every country of the Far East. And for charm of sentiment I must give the palm to Korea, over China, Siam, Malaya, and even over Japan. The *danseuses* of the last-named country are, of course, far more attractive objects, but I was unable, perhaps from ignorance of the entire significance of the elaborate Japanese dances, to discover in the rhythmic movements of the *geisha* or the elaborate evolutions of the *No*-dance, a simplicity of sentiment and a suggestion of romance—the latter the rarest thing in the Far East—equal to those of the Korean dancing-girl. I engaged a troop of them to dance one afternoon in the grounds of the British Consulate, which the Consul was good enough to lend me for the occasion. They arrived in chairs, with a band, and the considerable retinue which invariably appears in a mysterious manner at every eastern function. Each dancer produced her pipe and tobacco-pouch, and the performance was preceded by a long and animated conversation. Then mats were spread upon the grass, the band sat down in a long row, and under the trees, amidst the quaint many-eaved architecture, to a discordant and yet curiously effective accompaniment, was displayed before us the Korean version of the universal poem of "Love's Young Dream." One of the *danseuses* assumed the *toga virilis* and the pot-hat, the other remaining the embodiment of womankind. The former was of course the suitor, the pursuer, the love-beseecher; the latter was the besought, the elusive, the hesitating, the *Ewigweibliche*. A more prosaic metaphor would be that of the candle and the moth. To a hand-thundering of the drums the lover advanced, displaying himself like a purple pigeon in the sun. The drums faded to a mournful piping of the flutes, and the loved one retreated in



KOREAN DANCING-GIRLS : "LOVE'S YOUNG DREAM "

(Instantaneous Photograph)

shyness and refusal. With a less confident quick-step the former advanced and renewed his persuasive suit. The latter repelled him, but less cruelly. The music grew tenderer and more insinuating, and the hopeful one returned to his charming. The shyness grew less, the warmth grew greater, the *lento* changed to *adagio*, and the *adagio* to *presto*, the confidence of the one increased with the increasing hesitancy of the other, the pursuer revolved in a large but decreasing circle, the pursued fluttered in her little round, the space diminished, the thrill became more intense, the doomed pair were within a few feet of each other, till on a sudden space was annihilated for them and time at an end, and to a final triumphant outburst of wood and brass they were merged in each other's arms in an ecstasy of passion, and the spectators relieved their pent-up feelings in an explosive sigh. The victor was vanquished at the moment of his conquest; the captured triumphant in the moment of her defeat—an exquisite personification of the sex which—

“draws

Men upward as a moon of spring,
High wheeling, vast and bosom-full,
Half clad in clouds and white as wool,
Draws all the strong seas following.”

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE QUESTION OF KOREA.

THE Chino-Japanese war is the last link in a perfectly straight chain of circumstances. Korea remained sealed against foreigners of all nations until 1876. In 1866 an American trading schooner called the *General Sherman* had been destroyed by the Koreans, and her crew and passengers murdered. A man-of-war, the *Wachusett*, was sent to obtain satisfaction, but failed to do so. In 1870 a small American expedition again appeared, and while negotiations were in progress the Koreans fired upon a surveying party. Thereupon the American commander landed his troops upon the island of Kiang Hwa, destroyed five Korean forts, routed the army, killing three hundred men, and then retired, with the result that Korea was more firmly closed against foreigners than ever. The young King came of age in 1873, and succeeded his cruel and conservative father. In 1875 some sailors from a Japanese man-of-war were fired upon while drawing water at Kiang Hwa. The Japanese captain also destroyed a fort and killed a number of Koreans, but his Government followed up the incident by sending a fleet under General Kuroda to demand satisfaction, and offer the Koreans the alternative of a treaty of commerce or a war. The former was chosen, China, on being appealed to by the Koreans, refusing—as she has done on several similar occasions—to have anything to do with the action of her nominal vassal. A treaty was therefore signed on February 26, 1876, between Korea and

Japan, and from this moment dates the opening of Korea to foreign intercourse. On this occasion, too, the suzerainty of China was formally set aside, without any protests on her part—indeed, with her express recognition, since she refused to interfere. Article I. of this treaty reads as follows: "Chosen being an independent State enjoys the same Sovereign rights as Japan." Chemulpo, Fusan, and Wön-san were opened by this treaty to Japanese trade.

The King himself was in favour of extending the same privileges to other nations at their request, but the conservative party prevented him. In 1882 fresh overtures were made by foreign nations, and the reactionaries took alarm. Led by a "scholar" named Pe Lo-kuan, an insurrection broke out in Seoul, directed chiefly against the Japanese, as the promoters of foreign intercourse. Several members of the Japanese Legation were murdered in the streets, the Legation itself was attacked, and Consul Hanabusa and his staff were at last compelled to cut their way through the mob and make for the palace, where they hoped to find refuge. Here, however, the gates were shut against them, so they fought their way out of the city with the greatest pluck, and walked all night to Chemulpo, where, to escape violence, they put to sea in a native boat. Fortunately the British surveying vessel, the *Flying Fish*, saw them, and conveyed them to Nagasaki. This happened in July, 1882. Of course the Japanese Government took instant action, but with great moderation began by merely sending Mr. Hanabusa back to Seoul with a strong escort to demand reparation. This was abjectly offered, and a Chinese force which arrived with unusual promptitude suppressed the rebellion, executed a number of the leaders, and caused their mangled bodies to be publicly exposed. A sum of 500,000 dols. was accepted by the Japanese as indemnity, but was subsequently forgiven to Korea in consequence of her inability to pay it. Next year, other nations once more following in the steps of Japan, treaties with Korea were concluded by the United States, France, England, and Germany.

In 1885 the whole incident was repeated, with this difference, that the instigators of the outbreak were a few students who had imbibed progressive notions in Japan, and who imagined that if they began by vigorous assassination foreign nations would support them. During a dinner-party to celebrate the opening of the new post-office, an attempt was made to murder Ming Yong-ik, an influential nobleman, who, though he had visited the United States, was most bitterly opposed to the party of progress, and was known to have expostulated with the King for having conferred office on the students who had been educated in Japan. The revolutionary leaders proceeded to the palace, secured the person and to some extent the sympathy of the King, and in his name, and no doubt with his assent, despatched messengers, and finally an autograph letter from himself, to Mr. Takezoye, the Japanese Minister, begging him to come instantly and safeguard the royal person. Mr. Takezoye, accompanied by the Legation guard of 130 Japanese soldiers, complied, and guarded the palace for two days. In the meantime, the revolutionists executed five of the conservative Ministers. By this time the Chinese troops in Seoul had decided to assert themselves: two thousand proceeded to the palace, and without allowing any opportunity for negotiation or explanation, fired upon the Japanese guard. Although outnumbered by almost ten to one, the latter had no difficulty in holding their own, but at length the King decided, to prevent further bloodshed, to place himself in the hands of the Chinese, and therefore he proceeded alone, with the consent of Mr. Takezoye, to the Chinese commander. Having no further reason for remaining, the Japanese left the palace, fought their way to the Legation, but finding it surrounded by an armed mob of Chinese and Koreans, and without any provisions for a siege, they quitted it again, and it was immediately burned behind them. Then for the second time the Japanese representative and a small band of his countrymen fought their way through the streets of Seoul, and walked twenty-six miles to Chemulpo, where they chartered a steamer

and returned to Japan. Again the Japanese Government demanded satisfaction, but this time from China, on account of the action of the Chinese soldiers. The negotiations between Count Ito and Li Hung-chang, at Tientsin, in 1885, followed, and after long delays, and finally a distinct hint from the former, that if a result satisfactory to Japan was not arrived at, war would be declared, the Convention of Tientsin was concluded at the eleventh hour. China agreed to withdraw her troops from Korea, to punish her officers who had commanded the troops in Seoul on the occasion of the attack upon the Japanese there on December 6th of the preceding year, and to investigate the outrages committed by her troops on the following day. The clauses of the Convention, which has unfortunately never been published officially, were two. The first declared that the King of Korea should be invited to form a force sufficient to preserve order in future, to be trained by officers of some nation other than China or Japan, and that certain internal reforms should be instituted by him; and the second, that either China or Japan should have the right to dispatch troops to Korea, if necessary to preserve order and protect their nationals, on giving notice each to the other, and that when order was restored both forces should be withdrawn simultaneously. Thus China at last formally recognised the equality of Japan with herself so far as Korea was concerned. This Convention shows one other important thing—that Japan put forward only the most moderate claims, that she sought no advantages for herself in Korea, but accepted in full satisfaction of her demands conditions which merely guaranteed the future peace and prosperity of Korea. These facts should have been borne in mind when charges of intemperance were made against Japan for declaring war.

For the third time history has sought to repeat itself. Another rebellion broke out, which the King of Korea was wholly unable to suppress. This time Japan did not wait for the burning of her Legation and the expulsion of her representative by the forces of Korean reaction. But let it be remembered that while..

landing troops in perfect accordance with her treaty rights, she again contented herself with proposing to China the joint occupation of the country until reforms should have been definitely carried out to render future disturbances impossible. Not one sign has she ever given of the slightest intention to secure territorial advantages for herself in Korea. On the contrary she has taken every occasion to declare specifically that she was determined upon the independence of Korea. Upon China must rest the responsibility of refusing these terms. Her attitude toward Korea has been marked by all her characteristic unscrupulousness. When her suzerainty over Korea has brought prestige, she has asserted it; when it has involved responsibility, she has repudiated it. She has at last fallen between the two stools. So far as my knowledge of the situation goes, I am unable to see how Japan could have acted with greater moderation, or could have been satisfied to propose any other conditions.

In the anti-Japanese feeling prevalent in England at the outbreak of the war, Japan was currently charged with having deliberately provoked hostilities for the gratification of her own ends. This charge is baseless in the form in which it was commonly made. It is true enough that Japan had long contemplated the possibility and even probability of war with China about Korea, and she had made the most careful preparations for this. But to fear and foresee a series of events is quite different from provoking them. Otherwise half the nations of Europe might be charged with provoking the hostility of their neighbours at this moment. Japan, understanding China so incomparably better than any European nation understands that strange country, knew well enough that Korean troubles would occur and recur until drastic measures were taken for their permanent suppression, and that China would always oppose these measures, even by force if diplomacy and procrastination should fail. At last the old trouble came, in a rising of the *Togaku-to*, as it is called in Japanese, or the

Tonghak rebellion—the two characters of this name signifying “Eastern Learning.” This was nothing more than one of the periodical revolts against official exactions, but it grew rather faster than usual, and the rotten Korean government was beaten in several engagements. China thereupon despatched a considerable force to crush the *Tonghaks*, and in the despatch announcing the fact to Japan she employed an expression which deliberately set the Li-Ito Convention at defiance. Japan had already been intensely irritated by an incident which had just occurred, and this significant neglect of a diplomatic requirement added fresh fuel to the flames of her anger.

Japanese public opinion at the time cannot be understood without a knowledge of this incident. I will therefore narrate it in the fewest possible words. The leader of the Korean revolutionists who had attacked Ming Yong-ik, that arch-conservative and denouncer of the young Koreans who had been educated in Japan, was a certain Kim Ok-kyun. When the revolt was crushed and the hopes of the young Korean Japanophiles at an end, Kim Ok-kyun naturally sought refuge in Japan. There he lived in security and obscurity for some time, but the Korean Government had neither forgotten nor forgiven him. Two or three Koreans were accordingly despatched secretly to Japan to assassinate him—in itself a sufficient outrage to Japanese soil. They nearly succeeded, but Kim's suspicions being aroused at the last moment he failed to keep the appointment at which he was to have been killed. By and by, however, one of the conspirators succeeded in luring him to Shanghai upon some pretext or other, and he was shot to death in a native hotel there on the very night of his arrival. So far from arresting the murderer, the Chinese authorities sent him in all comfort, with the corpse of his victim, upon a Chinese gunboat to Korea, where he was received with rejoicings, loaded with honours and given official rank, while the body of Kim was publicly hacked in pieces, his head salted and promenaded through the principal cities,

and his relatives murdered. Thus the man who had raised the standard of revolt in Korea for Japanese ideas, and who had been received by Japan as an exile to be protected (just as we have received revolutionary exiles in England), was decoyed away to Chinese soil, murdered there with the almost certain connivance of China, his murderer treated with every consideration, and a Chinese Government vessel employed to take both assassin and victim to the honour and the degradation which respectively awaited them in Korea: This was enough to have provoked an outburst of popular anger in a much more sedate country than Japan, and it was while the Japanese were thus deeply indignant at this combination of Korean treachery and Chinese insult that Chinese troops were sent to Korea, and the irritating despatch sent, as I have described. The Japanese instantly despatched a still larger force, and the diplomatic negotiations began.

It will be remembered that China raised no protest when Korea described herself as an independent State, and concluded foreign treaties upon that basis, and that she had further admitted Japan to equal rights with herself for the preservation of order in Korea. Yet the despatch announcing to Japan the departure of Chinese troops to Korea was couched in these words:—

“The application upon examination is found to be urgent both in words and in fact, and that it is in harmony with our constant practice to protect *our tributary states* by sending our troops to assist them. These circumstances were accordingly submitted to His Imperial Majesty, and in obedience to his will, General Yeh, Commander of troops in Chihli has been ordered to proceed at once to Zenra and Chinsei in Korea with selected troops, and to speedily suppress the disturbance in such manner as he may deem most convenient in order to restore the peace of *our tributary state* and to dispel the anxiety of the subjects of every nation residing in Korea for commercial purposes, and at the same time the General is commanded to return with the troops as soon as the desired object is attained.”

By thus asserting at the outset the fact that China regarded Korea as a tributary State, the Chinese Government deliberately repudiated the past and challenged Japan to make good the

position which she had always maintained, and which had been formally recognised nine years before. A less conciliatory despatch—especially considering that Japan was smarting under the murder of Kim Ok-kyun—could not have been penned. The reply of the Japanese Government could easily have been foreseen. It was (June 7), “In reply, I beg to declare that, although the words ‘tributary State’ appear in your Note, the Imperial government has never recognised Korea as a tributary State of China.” At the same time the Japanese Minister in Peking informed the Tsungli Yamên that, “owing to the existence of a disturbance of a grave nature in Korea necessitating the presence of Japanese troops there, it is the intention of the Imperial government to send a body of Japanese troops to that country.” Two days later (June 9) the Tsungli Yamên, with extraordinary promptitude, replied as follows, and the despatch is worth giving at length, as it is so deliciously characteristic of Chinese diplomatic methods:—

“The sole object of your country in sending troops is evidently to protect the Legation, Consulates, and commercial people in Korea, and, consequently, it may not be necessary on the part of your country to despatch a great number of troops, and, besides, as no application therefore has been made by Korea, it is requested that no troops shall proceed to the interior of Korea so that they may not cause alarm to her people. And, moreover, since it is feared that in the event the soldiers of the two nations should meet on the way, cases of unexpected accident might occur, owing to the difference of language and military etiquette, we beg to request in addition that you will be good enough to telegraph the purport of this communication to the Government of Japan.”

In the despatch China totally and calmly ignored the fact that by treaty Japan had identically the same rights as China to send troops to Korea! Of course the Japanese reply (June 12) pointed this out:—

“The Imperial Japanese Government has never recognised Korea as a tributary state of China. Japan despatched her troops in virtue of the Chemulpo Convention, and in so doing she has followed the procedure laid down in the Treaty of Tientsin. As to the number of troops, the Japanese Government is compelled to exercise its own judgment. Although no restriction is placed upon the movement of the Japanese troops, in Korea, they will not be sent where their presence is not deemed necessary.

The Japanese troops are under strict discipline, and the Japanese Government is confident that they will not precipitate a collision with the Chinese forces. It is hoped that China has adopted similar precautions."

This unanswerable despatch brought down the curtain upon the first act. Both Chinese and Japanese troops were in Korea, precisely as the Li-Ito Convention of 1885 had agreed that under such circumstances they should be. The Chinese Ministers had vainly endeavoured to wriggle out of their previous promises, and being unable to do so, this aspect of the matter disappeared.

The next step came from Japan, and took the form of the following proposals for the future administration of Korea (June 17):—

"As to the present events, Japan and China to unite their efforts for the speedy suppression of the disturbance of her insurgent people. After the suppression of the disturbance, Japan and China, with a view to the improvement of the internal administration of Korea, to respectively send a number of Commissioners charged with the duty of investigating measures of improvement, in the first place on the following general points:—(a) Examination of the financial administration. (b) Selection of the Central and Local Officials. (c) Establishment of an army necessary for national defence in order to preserve the peace of the land."

To this the Chinese Minister in Tokyo replied that the disturbance was already put down, and that reforms must be left to Korea herself. This suggestion was amusing enough, but the argument by which it was supported was farcical. H. E. Wang wrote: "Even China herself would not interfere with the internal administration of Korea, and Japan having from the very first recognised the independence of Korea, cannot have the right to interfere with the same." This is Chinese diplomacy at its happiest: first, Korea is not independent, but dependent upon China, and therefore Japan has no right to interfere; second, Korea is independent, even of China, and therefore again Japan has no right to interfere! Is it to be wondered at that Japan should brush aside diplomacy conducted with such puerile craft? The point to be borne in mind, however, is that Japan requested China to unite with her

in joint action for the reform and strengthening of an independent Korea, and that China refused to do so. The parallel of Great Britain, France and Egypt will occur to every reader. Japan had determined that this should be the last wrangle over Korea, and pursuing the parallel, she informed China in the following admirable despatch (June 22), that she should undertake the task single-handed if China persisted in her refusal:—

“The Imperial Government, much to its regret, finds it impossible to share the hopeful views entertained by your Excellency's Government regarding the actual situation in Korea at the present time. Sad experience teaches us that the Peninsular Kingdom is the theatre of political intrigues and civil revolts and disturbances of such frequent recurrence as to justify the conclusion that the Government of that country is lacking in some of the elements which are essential to responsible independence. The interests of Japan in Korea, arising from proximity as well as commerce, are too important and far-reaching to allow her to view with indifference the deplorable condition of affairs in that kingdom. In the estimation of the Imperial Government the withdrawal of forces should be consequent upon the establishment of some understanding that will serve to guarantee the future peace, order, and good government of the country. That course of action is, moreover, it seems to his Imperial Majesty's Government, not only in perfect harmony with the spirit of the Tientsin Convention, but it accords with the dictates of reasonable precaution. Should the Government of China continue to hold views antagonistic to those which I have frankly and in good faith presented to your Excellency, it cannot be expected that the Imperial Government will, under the circumstances, feel at liberty to sanction the present retirement of their troops from Korea.”

This was followed by a formal declaration, to the Tsurugli Yamên that “in this juncture the Imperial Japanese Government find themselves relieved of all responsibility for any eventuality that may, in future, arise out of the situation.” China still did not realise the danger that lay before her, and tried one more piece of bluff by demanding that the withdrawal of the Japanese troops should precede any negotiations. The Japanese, not being fools, dismissed that suggestion for what it was worth, and took an early occasion to inform China that any further despatch of troops to Korea would be regarded by Japan as a hostile act. Both countries had up to that point availed themselves of their rights under the Tientsin Convention,

and it could not be pretended that the Chinese and Japanese forces together were not abundantly capable of keeping order in Korea. For Japan to have allowed China to send reinforcements at this moment would have been an act of suicide. She knew Chinese methods far too well to permit anything of the kind. China's reply was to send the *Kowshing*, full of troops, relying upon the British flag to protect them on the sea. The *Chen Yuen* met the *Naniwa* at sea, fired upon her and steamed away (there seems no reason to doubt the statements to this effect), and shortly afterwards the *Naniwa* met the *Kowshing*, and on the latter failing to surrender, sunk her. I express no opinion upon the technical point of international law involved, though to a non-expert it seems clear enough, but it is probable that if the Japanese had committed an outrage upon the British flag on this occasion, they would have been brought to book for it before the lapse of five months. It is therefore fair to presume that they were within their rights. The Japanese declaration of war came on August 3, and that of China, affording a painful comparison by its tone and language, followed immediately. Subsequent events are too well known to need recapitulation; they may be summarised for the present in the four names, Asan, Phyöng-yang, Yalu, and Port Arthur.

In Korea itself, in the meantime, little has happened. The anti-Japanese party has of course been thrust out of office, and replaced by politicians having presumably Japanese sympathies. The Government has vacillated, so far as was possible to it under the circumstances, between China and Japan, promising and intriguing first for one party and then for another. Naturally the official class has made every effort in its power to save its historic right to plunder the people. The Japanese have concluded a treaty with the King, to last till the conclusion of the war, by which his independence is guaranteed. This has, of course, no significance as indicating the sympathy of the King, as he had no choice but to accept it; but it is of importance as

putting the Japanese attitude formally on record. A number of reforms of a sweeping character have been imposed upon the government, and the only criticism that can be passed upon them is that they exhibit perhaps an undue confidence in the possible political development of the Korean character. As Japan, however, will be charged with carrying them out, she may well be left with the responsibility of having proposed them. As for the intrigues, the shilly-shallying, the professions of grateful friendship followed by hostile treachery, and these again succeeded by promises of faithfulness and pitiful revolts, they are but the natural consequences of stirring up an administration which has been well called a cesspool of corruption. The main fact is that Korea has come under the influence of Japan, and that under its influence she will remain.

Japan has one indisputable claim to her new sphere of interest: she has won it by the sword. That is the kind of right which the world most easily recognises. Moreover, she may put in an additional moral claim on the ground that her control will confer vast benefits upon the unfortunate Korean people. But beside these she has other very cogent justifications for her action. In the first place, it was she who opened Korea to foreign intercourse. And second, the greater part of Korea's modern trade has been created by Japan, and is in the hands of her merchants. Except with China and Japan, Korea has little trade worth mentioning, and the interest of the latter is exactly twice that of the former. The net value of Korean direct foreign trade for 1892 and 1893 together was 4,240,498 dollars with China, and 8,306,571 dollars with Japan. In tonnage of shipping the proportion was vastly greater in favour of Japan. Her tonnage in 1893 was over twenty times that of China, and the number of vessels entered and cleared was over twenty-five times. The exact figures are: tonnage—China, 14,376; Japan, 304,224: number of vessels—China, 37; Japan, 956. In fact, the tonnage of Japan's shipping trade with Korea last year was more than seven times that of all other nations put together,

including China. Many a western war has been fought to preserve a smaller actual and prospective commercial preponderance.

As regards the future, unless a great change has recently come over the diplomacy of Japan, it is Russia that she fears. The status of all the other European Powers in the Far East is approximately fixed. Spain and Portugal count for nothing. Japan could wipe out either of them. France will hardly claim to extend north and east of Tongking. Germany is making great progress with her trade, but she has no opportunity to seek territorial advantages. Great Britain has reached her limit, with the exception of the Malay Peninsula, which will certainly be hers sooner or later; of a naval base north of Hongkong; and of Siam, in which developments are possible; and Japan is not interested in two of these directions. But for Russia the Far East lies in the direct line of immediate expansion. The late Tsar made the path of international politics an easy and a pleasant one to tread, and his successor may be counted upon to preserve a similar attitude. But Japan has learned that nations have to reckon with the inevitable *Drang* of other nations, and that they cannot count for security upon the good-will of any individual. Japan has suffered once in a little transaction with Russia, when she exchanged Saghalin for the Kurile Islands. She has seen illegitimate European-directed sealing expeditions which sailed secretly from her shores fired upon murderously by armed parties in Russian waters, and no redress or even information has been obtainable. She has watched the Russian fleet come for its manœuvres year after year to the Korean bay in which lies Port Lazareff: only the other day a Russian cruiser, the *Vitiaz*, was lost there. She knows that the Russian Minister at Seoul has tried—as one of his own colleagues expressed it to me—to *jouer un grand rôle dans un petit trou*. She has applied to the Russian Minister and the Chinese Resident there the proverb that “two foxes cannot live in the same sack.” She remembers when a Russian man-of-war—I think it was the *Vladimir Monomach*—

beat to quarters in Yokohama harbour and trained its guns upon an approaching British ship, and when she telegraphed down the coast for a little gunboat of her own which carried a 35-ton gun, and anchored it alongside the Russian, before sending on board to exact an apology for the breach of neutrality. The time for Russian action in the Far East may not be ripe yet, for it will be some time before the Trans-Siberian railway will be of any service. But sooner or later Russia will need a winter harbour in the Far East, and Japan knows that in Russian plans Port Lazareff has long been fixed upon as one of the two possible places. This would be a serious matter for Japan, and in her present state of mind I feel sure she would rather fight than yield it. Yet for my own part, as I have already said, I am convinced that the Russian terminus of the Trans-Siberian Railway will be (unless much bigger events take place) in Korcan waters. The discussion of this eventuality, however, is connected with the momentous suggestion to which I have already alluded and which is treated in a later chapter, namely, that of Asia for the Asiatics. Of this, Europe is destined some day to hear not a little. But in connection with the immediate future of Korea it is of more interest to see exactly what is the present attitude of Russia as defined in the one international document upon the subject which has been published. Port Hamilton, it will be remembered, was occupied by British vessels under Vice-Admiral Sir W. Dowell in April, 1885, under instructions from Mr. Gladstone's Government. The naval authorities reported that it was worse than useless; protests were received from China, Japan, and Korea, and it was understood that if the occupation were persisted in, both Russia and Japan would seek some similar territorial strategic advantage. Lord Iddesleigh (a change of Ministries having meanwhile occurred) therefore confidentially advised the British Minister in Peking that the British Government would be prepared to evacuate Port Hamilton "if any suitable arrangement could be made which would ensure that neither it nor Port Lazareff

shall pass into hostile [that is, Russian] hands." An assurance to this effect was obtained by China from Russia, and communicated in the following terms, which now become once more of great importance :—

"Rumours have recently been disseminated from Corea that Russia was interfering with China's feudatory. The Chinese Government accordingly demanded an explanation from Russia as to the existence or otherwise of this fact, and in due course the Russian Foreign Office gave the Chinese Minister Liu the most frank assurances that the Russian Government had absolutely no such intentions. M. Ladygensky, the Russian Chargé d'Affaires at Peking, further went to Tient-sin at the orders of the Russian Foreign Office, and had several personal conversations with the Grand Secretary Li, Minister Superintendent of Northern Trade, to whom he repeated and enlarged upon the answer earlier given to the Minister Liu. He also stated that the Russian Government gave a sincere promise that if the British would evacuate Port Hamilton, *the Russian Government would not occupy Korean territory under any circumstances whatsoever.*

"The Grand Secretary Li, Minister Superintendent of Northern Trade, then told M. Ladygensky that what was feared was that after the British vessels of war had retired from these islands they would be again taken possession by some other Power. Russia, therefore, must guarantee that she would not hereafter seize these islands, and on the faith of this guarantee China could officially address the British Government, and urge their speedy evacuation.

"In the course of time M. Ladygensky, in obedience to instructions from the Russian Government, gave a most explicit guarantee, distinctly declaring that in the future Russia would not take Korean territory.

"The Chinese Government is therefore naturally in a position, on the faith of the guarantee of the Russian Government, to give a guarantee to the British Government." *

Port Hamilton was accordingly evacuated on February 27, 1887.

It will be observed that the Russian assurance came wholly through the Tsungli Yamên. We—the public, at least—have no other source of information concerning this assurance. We do not know what conditions may have been attached to it, or what was the exact form taken by M. Ladygensky's "explicit guarantee." At the time this was given, China's pledge was sufficient, because it was then believed that China would have been a valuable ally in case war had resulted from the breaking of the promise. But China is now known to be virtually worthless

* The Tsungli Yamên to Sir J. Walsham, Peking, October 31, 1886. China, No. 1 (1887), p. 38.

as a fighting force, yet we have only her word that Russia promised, years before the Trans-Siberian Railway was sanctioned, that she "would not occupy Korean territory under any circumstances whatsoever." And the word of China, on such a matter at such a moment, is not worth to-day the paper on which it was written. Such, then, is the position of Russia in this question; China has been brushed aside; Korea will doubtless be left independent under a more or less defined Japanese protection; and Japan is left face to face with a problematical future.

JAPAN.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE JAPAN OF TO-DAY.

JAPAN has at length come into her inheritance. Kossuth is reported to have said that the two most wonderful men in the world were Prince Bismarck and the Emperor of Japan. From one of these the wonder has somewhat abated of late, but the country of the other has finally imposed itself upon the somewhat unwilling recognition of the West. The "child of the world's old age" has proved to be its most remarkable offspring. Until to-day, however, the world has not taken Japan quite seriously, in spite of the thousands of travellers who have visited her and the hundreds of volumes that have been written about her. But now that she has been seen sword in hand, sweeping the Chinese hordes out of Korea and Manchuria, driving the Chinese ships off the sea, and capturing their principal fortress in the course of a morning, and at the same time concluding a treaty with Great Britain on equal terms, Japan stands no longer in need of the encomiums and the prophecies of her friends. Her leap from feudalism to modernity is without parallel, but everybody appreciates it now. In a quarter of a century she has sprung from an Oriental despotism, hating foreigners above all else, and differing only from other Oriental despotisms by the fact that the ruling influence among her people was one of the strictest, loftiest, and most punctilious codes of honour that man has ever devised, to a nation whose army and navy may meet those of contemporary Europe on equal terms; whose laws will bear comparison with any in

existence; whose manufactures are driving western producers from the field; whose art-work has created a new standard of taste abroad; whose education has produced a band of experts second to none—it was a Japanese physician who first discovered the bacillus of the bubonic plague in Hongkong; whose colonising strength suggests more than one alteration of the map of Asia; whose official statistics, for truthfulness and elaboration, leave those of many western countries far behind—her last Budget covers 1,438 printed pages; whose people are simply thirsting for fresh fields to conquer, and scorn the mere idea of failure. All this, however, has become a commonplace of information, and so far as I am concerned, I have written about it in so much detail elsewhere,* that here I propose only to touch upon two or three aspects of Japanese life which characterise her more intimately to-day than ever before.

The first aspect under which the world must now regard Japan with respectful interest is that of a first-class Power. Four years ago I wrote that the Japanese army was virtually a European force, and that it might be counted upon to make a desperate fight against any enemy in the world. To-day there is no longer any need to dwell upon the armed strength of Japan, since war—the supreme test of paper and parade-ground dispositions—has tried it. The Japanese army and navy have proved themselves more than equal to the physical estimate that their admirers had formed of them. As rapidly as Germany when Von Moltke telegraphed “Krieg mobil,” the army was ready. Force after force was despatched with a secrecy, a simplicity, a celerity and a completeness that few European nations could equal; the reserves came to the colours with a mechanical precision; and this time literally not a gaiter-button, in Marshal Lebœuf’s famous phrase, was lacking from their equipment. Every European expert has been enthusiastic in his praise of the perfection of Japanese methods, the

* In my book entitled “The Real Japan : Studies in Japanese Manners, Morals, Administration and Politics,” London : T. Fisher Unwin, fourth edition, 1894.

discipline of Japanese men, and the scientific tactics of Japanese officers; while the succession of brilliant victories tells its own tale of the primal virtue of courage. Of this the vernacular papers have been full of stories, one of which I will quote as typical of the Japanese people. At the battle of Sōng-hwan a bugler named Genjiro stood beside Captain Matsuzaki, when a bullet struck him in the chest. Though knowing he was seriously wounded, he continued to blow until breath failed him and he fell dead where he had stood. The so-called "Christian Patriotic Relief Corps" of his native village of Funaomura collected a few presents to send to his family—who were people in the humblest circumstances—with a letter of consolation; the headman collected the people of the village, the gifts were presented by the local member of Parliament, and in reply Genjiro's father spoke as follows:—"It is the lot of all men to die. My son had to die some time. Instead of falling asleep in a corner of this miserable hovel, unmourned save by a few relatives, he has fallen on the field of honour and received the praise of a multitude of his superiors. Hence his mother and I cannot look upon this as a mournful occasion. We rejoice that our son has been loyal to Japan, even to the point of shedding his blood in defence of her honour."

The Japanese army consists to-day of the Imperial Guard, and six Divisions with headquarters in the principal districts of the country. These average about 10,000 men each, and to each is allotted a First and Second Reserve. According to the latest statistics, the total strength is as follows:—

	With the Colours.	First Reserve.	Second Reserve.
Imperial Guard	6,530	8,610	5,507
First Division (Tokyo)	10,068	15,549	19,870
Second Division (Sendai)	8,892	16,428	20,002
Third Division (Nagoya).....	9,011	13,912	15,897
Fourth Division (Osaka).....	9,157	14,876	15,595
Fifth Division (Hiroshima) ..	8,882	13,462	17,077
Sixth Division (Kumamoto) ..	9,885	14,870	16,039
Total	62,425	97,707	109,987—270,119

The actual fighting force of Japan, therefore, without taking into account the large numbers of less-trained levies she could raise in dire extremity, amounts to at least 250,000 men. It is sufficient to add that a force of this strength, armed, drilled, equipped, and led as the Japanese army is, renders Japan the leading Power of Asia so far as operations on land are concerned.

Japan might well have raised and perfected this force without having developed the moral qualities which are as essential as mere strength to the proper conception of a Great Power. That she realises the imperative need of these—apart from the tributes that have been paid to her troops for their admirable behaviour, and the consideration with which they have treated the people among whom they have been quartered,—a single example may suffice to show. Soon after the declaration of war the following proclamation was made to the Japanese army by Count Oyama, the Minister for War, who subsequently took command of the Second Army, and so successfully attacked Port Arthur:—

Belligerent operations being properly confined to the military and naval forces actually engaged, and there being no reason whatever for enmity between individuals because their countries are at war, the common principles of humanity dictate that succour and rescue should be extended even to those of the enemy's forces who are disabled either by wounds or disease. In obedience to these principles, civilised nations in time of peace enter into conventions to mutually assist disabled persons in time of war without distinction of friend or foe. This humane union is called the Geneva Convention, or more commonly the Red Cross Association. Japan became a party to it in June, 1886, and her soldiers have already been instructed that they are bound to treat with kindness and helpfulness such of their enemies as may be disabled by wounds or disease. China not having joined any such Convention, it is possible that her soldiers, ignorant of these enlightened principles, may subject diseased or wounded Japanese to merciless treatment. Against such contingencies the Japanese troops must be on their guard. But at the same time they must never forget that however cruel and vindictive the foe may show himself, he must nevertheless be treated in accordance with the acknowledged rules of civilisation; his disabled must be succoured and his captured kindly and considerately protected.

It is not alone to those disabled by wounds or sickness that merciful and gentle treatment should be extended. Similar treatment is also due to those who offer no resistance to our arms. Even the body of a dead enemy should be treated with respect. We cannot too much admire the course pursued by a certain Western country which in handing over an enemy's general complied with all the rites and

ceremonies suitable to the rank of the captive. Japanese soldiers should always bear in mind the gracious benevolence of their august Sovereign and should not be more anxious to display courage than charity. They have now an opportunity to afford practical proof of the value they attach to these principles.

(Signed) OYAMA IWAO, Count,
Minister of State for War.

September 22nd, 27th year of *Meiji*.

It is perhaps not too much to say that in the history of warfare no army has ever been sent to the front with a more admirable exhortation. For the sake of contrast, it may be recalled that at this time Chinese Viceroys were offering and paying rewards for the heads and hands of Japanese soldiers, and that Chinese officers, as an eyewitness has testified, were claiming and receiving them. It was rumoured that one of the conditions of peace to be insisted upon by Japan was that the Chinese officials who had been guilty of this barbarity should be handed over to them for execution. The rumour was denied, but, for my own part, I am sorry it was not true, since one lesson of this kind would have taught China more civilisation than she has learned during the last thousand years.

The Japanese people have exhibited the greatest patriotism and enthusiasm for this war, and if their own newspapers may be trusted, chiefly because its result was to be the carrying of Japanese enlightenment into the darkest country of Asia. An enormous sum was subscribed in a few weeks and voluntarily presented to the Government. When a loan of 50,000,000 dols. was asked for, 77,000,000 were promptly offered. Not for one moment has the slightest doubt of the result of the war been felt. Certain foreigners, says the *Japan Mail*, were expressing surprise at the quiet manner in which the announcement of the victory of the Yalu was received in Tokyo. "The reply was eminently characteristic of the Japanese. 'But this is only what we knew would happen; it was a matter of course; why should there be any unusual display or demonstration if the victory of our arms was positively assured from the outset?'" Yet the one point upon which the Japanese might well have felt

considerable anxiety was the question of their equality with the Chinese at sea, especially as the great fight, when it came, was bound to be to a large extent one of cruisers against ironclads.

One other point only calls for comment in this connection. European writers, knowing in most cases little of the extreme strictness of Japanese military organisation, have frequently said that both the Japanese and Chinese accounts of what had happened must be received with equal scepticism until supported by independent testimony. The correspondents at Shanghai—who have been responsible for an almost unbroken succession of misstatements concerning the war—have constantly made this assertion. It is so baseless as to be ridiculous. Not in one single instance has the official report by the responsible Japanese commander been shown to deviate by a hair's breadth from the exact truth so far as he could possibly know it. All Japanese statistics, as I have said, are compiled with more than German detail and scrupulousness; every Japanese soldier wears a metal disc slung round his neck for purposes of identification; and the most precise detail of every action either has been published or will be when the history of the war comes to be written. A friend at the centre of affairs in Japan wrote to me upon this point as follows:—"It has always to be remembered, in judging between Chinese and Japanese accounts, that the former emanate from private and irresponsible sources, the latter from official ones. The salient features of every fight are reported by the Japanese Admiral or General in command, and the report is published by the Government. Any wilful perversions of facts would involve a court-martial for the officer, and would bring the political house about the Government's ears."

The second aspect under which the progress of Japan is of great interest to western nations, is that of a rival in manufactures. This is a far more serious question, especially to Great Britain, than is yet generally understood. The truth is that our manufacturers are actually being driven out of many markets of the East by the Japanese, and that the most com-

petent observers prophesy the rapid development of this process. The circumstances under which the war almost produced a commercial crisis in Japan, bear striking testimony to the growth of Japanese manufacturing interests. In 1893, there were about a quarter of a million cotton spindles in Japan; this year there are over half a million. On July 6th, the Osaka branch of the Bank of Japan had 6,000,000 dols. advanced for the purchase of raw cotton; when the war came, however, the banks withdrew a good deal of their credit, and the cotton-spinning companies found themselves threatened with ruin at a moment when their trade afforded the most legitimate justification for extension. Under these circumstances a panic was only averted by the promise of the Government to give assistance. In 1875, there was no cotton-spinning in Japan, as in that year the first European machines, of small capacity, were introduced. The following table, compiled by a Japanese economist, shows the rate of progress since then, with the inevitable corresponding decline of imports from Great Britain and India:—

			National Production in Japanese lbs.		Foreign Imports in English lbs.
1888	...	...	956,804	...	47,439,639
1889	...	...	20,952,687	...	42,810,912
1890	...	...	32,217,456	...	31,908,302
1891	...	...	45,306,444	...	17,337,600
1892	...	...	64,046,925	...	24,308,491

And new companies are being formed in Japan even at this moment, with a total capital of over 2,500,000 dols.

The skill and intelligence of the Japanese at all handicrafts is a matter of common knowledge; and considering at the same time the low rate of its remuneration, Japanese labour is beyond all comparison the cheapest in the world. In Miiki wages averaged last year, according to the British Consul's report, 17·37 *sen* (about 5d.) a day per man, and 7·85 *sen* per woman; at Kurume, 15·05 *sen* per man, and 9·95 *sen* per woman; at Kagoshima 15·35 *sen* per man, and 5·57 *sen* per woman. At the last-mentioned place the day averaged 10½ hours, while at

Miiki and Kurume the spindles were working 23 hours and 24 hours a day throughout the year, excepting holidays. At Osaka, the chief Japanese manufacturing centre, men earned from 6d. to 2s. 4d. a day, and women from 1½d. to 5d.; girls, eight or nine years old, worked 12 hours a day for 3d. Many of the mills run for 24 hours a day, in two shifts of 12 hours each, with a total allowance of forty minutes for meals. Moreover, the Diet is about to press the Government to remove or greatly modify the import and export duties upon cotton, which will probably be done, and the manufacture thus receive a very stimulating bonus. It is not only in cotton, however, that the Japanese are competing favourably with western nations. A "Japan Watch Company," of Yokohama, is about to commence the manufacture of watches on a large scale; it has procured the finest watch-making machinery from America, and has erected engines of one hundred horse power to run it. This is an enterprise for which Japanese labour is peculiarly adapted, and with the inexhaustible market of the East to supply, the promoters are probably not too sanguine in anticipating a great success. In match-making, again, the Japanese manufacturers have driven all competitors out of the East. "There is no doubt," says Mr. J. H. Gubbins, Secretary of the British Legation in Tokyo, "that so far as the Eastern market is concerned, no country can any longer compete with Japan in this particular industry." Five million gross went last year to Hongkong alone. Already Japan is manufacturing the rolling-stock for the Korean railway to be built. In every Consular and Customs Report the same story of Japanese competition is told. Japanese cotton goods have got as far as the Straits, and her clocks have already beaten even the countrymen of Sam Slick in that market. Fifteen hundred dozen undershirts came to Singapore in one recent consignment. From Macao Mr. Brennan writes:—"The articles from Japan at present consist of curios, cotton cloths, blankets, flannels, hosiery, soaps, lamps, tea-kettles, matches, hats, umbrellas, Gladstone bags,

silks, and such like. To give an idea of the cheapness, I may say that umbrellas of European pattern cost 30 cents to 1 dol. (11d. to 2s. 2d.), and cotton crapes 1 dol. to 1 dol. 20 cents a piece of 20 yards, that is 2s. 2d. to 2s. 7d. These are of fine texture and nice appearance, so that they are much appreciated by Chinese and Europeans, and worn as dresses and shirts. Indeed, the competition of Japanese goods is sure to become keener in course of time." At Tamsui, Japanese towelling has taken the place of former importations, and the import of Japanese cottons in 1893 was 20 per cent. greater than in 1892. The export of matting from Japan in 1893 was double that of 1892. At Niuchuang, Japanese flannel, blankets, brass buttons, lamps, umbrellas, pictures and mirrors, are becoming important items. At Ningpo, hundreds of hand-gins of Japanese make have been imported. The following report concerning the Korean market is worth quoting at length:—

"It may not be out of place to remark here that while the bulk of the Piece Goods and Metals sold in Fusan are of European origin, principally British, the fact should not be overlooked that Japan, by carefully studying arising needs, and supplying articles suitable to the tastes and means of Koreans and her Fusan colonists, is able to compete, more successfully each year, with almost all the goods of European manufacture. In no place, perhaps, is this rapidly growing competition more patent than in Fusan, where can be seen in the shops of the Settlement imitations of nearly all the Western goods and wares named in our Returns, from Piece Goods downwards. Besides these, there are Foreign-style suits, underclothing and hose, felt and straw hats, household furniture and culinary utensils, carpets, glassware, chinaware, lamps and fittings, soaps, scents, tinned provisions (fish, meat, and vegetables), wines and beer, farming implements, &c., mostly made in Osaka and selling at prices very much cheaper than those of Western manufacture. Whether Europe's persistent adherence to the gold standard is solely responsible or not for this state of affairs is a question well worthy of consideration; but certainly the rate of exchange seems to have a great deal to do with it. Another question presents itself: Is it not highly probable that, at no distant date, Japan—with better machinery, added to the advantages she already possesses in cheap labour, and the (to her) favourable exchange now ruling—will run European manufactures entirely off the Eastern markets?"*

Finally, I may take from the last report of Mr. Troup, the British Consul at Yokohama, the striking statement that, "to say the least, the trade in imports seems likely to suffer great

* Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs. Mr. Hunt's Report for Fusan, 1893.

restrictions, and, in the case of articles which come into competition with home Japanese manufactures, probable extinction." Between 1873 and 1892, the imports of Japan only rose from 26,000,000 dols. to 74,000,000 dols., while her exports increased from 20,000,000 dols. to 91,000,000 dols. In view of all these facts, and the improbability of any legislation in the direction of bi-metallism coming to the rescue of the British manufacturer, we cannot find much comfort in the fact that the percentage of the total foreign trade of Japan for 1892 was 35 per cent. for the British Empire, against 27 per cent. for the United States, 14 per cent. for France, 12 per cent. for China, and 4 per cent. for Germany. It is only too clear that in the future Japan is certain to be as keen a competitor in the peaceful arts of commerce as she might possibly be a dangerous enemy in the "trampled lanes of war."

The greatest ambition of Japan has been realised. She has always wanted to whip China, but far more, of late years, has she desired to be recognised by European Powers as on a level with themselves. Till this happened, she has felt that all she did was admired as one admires the precocity of a child; that her achievements were regarded as clever imitations; that the praise lavished upon her was a species of charity. And she was quite right. It had never occurred to the statesmen of Europe that Japan possessed, behind all her cleverness and her genius, a spirit of true originality, a creative power, in the great things of life—politics, administration, morals, science, and art; nor that the failure on their part to see this was the great thorn in the side of Japan. It must be borne in mind, in order to estimate this feeling, that while on the one hand Japan had an army which was not much inferior to any army in the world of its size, a navy small but first-rate in quality, a growing system of manufactures which threatened the predominance of western competitors, a development of scientific knowledge that was the surprise of all who understood it, and a political system of which the least that could be said was that it was based on the best

models, she was at the same time unable to exercise the least jurisdiction over the criminal foreigner in her midst, that her Customs system was dictated to her by foreign treaties, and that before she could make any change in these treaties she must procure the consent, not only of the really great Powers, but also of Switzerland, Belgium, Spain, Portugal, Denmark, Holland, Sweden, Hawaii, and Peru. Many of Japan's friends—*quorum pars minima fui*—had urged her to “denounce” the treaties—to give formal notice that after a certain date she would no longer recognise their validity. This would have been strictly within her rights, for the American diplomatist who had dictated the words of the first modern treaty of a foreign Power with Japan had expressed his regret that words he had inserted as giving to Japan the concession of revising her own treaties, had been distorted by other Powers into the claim of a right on their part to interfere in this. And it would have been well within her ability, too, for it was known that several of the great Treaty Powers would not have dreamed of fighting for their treaties, and that in their absence the others would not have found it convenient to do so. But Japan adhered to the slower though less risky processes of negotiation. The result was that the conditions of 1866 remained those of 1894. The Japan of feudalism was to Europe the Japan of modern times. Some two thousand five hundred strangers dwelt within her borders, and in order that the personal and commercial privileges of these might be safeguarded, Japan had no power over her own tariff and was compelled to tax her agricultural class excessively to provide a revenue; she had no jurisdiction over a single foreigner; she was unable to tax the foreigners who prospered by her trade; and while she had spent five million dollars in lighting and buoying her coasts she could not make foreign ships pay either light, tonnage, or harbour dues. Yet by treaty she was entitled to shake off these trammels. Is it surprising that when the Japanese people gradually awoke to a realisation of this fact, and the further one that foreigners were deliberately delaying any reform

in her interests, an anti-foreign spirit grew up and manifested itself in offensive ways?

In 1882 Count Inouye proposed that Japan should be opened to foreign trade, in return for the abolition of Consular jurisdiction, and that foreign judges should sit in a majority with Japanese judges when foreigners were tried by her new codes. This was rejected by the Powers, Great Britain leading the opposition. In 1884 it was proposed to Japan that she should have a limited jurisdiction over foreigners in return for the opening of a few more "accessible ports" to trade. Her reply was of course that she desired to have complete jurisdiction and was prepared to open her whole country. In 1886 a Conference of the sixteen Treaty Powers was held with Japan, and after a year's discussion, it was solemnly proposed to Japan that she should set up an array of highly-paid foreign judges, with a staff of foreign interpreters to render the evidence and their judgments from half a dozen foreign languages into Japanese and back, and that for fifteen years to come every change of every Japanese code should be "communicated" to every one of the sixteen Powers—to Belgium, to Denmark, to Portugal, to Hawaii, to Peru!—for its approval. So anxious was Count Inouye to get the great question settled that he even accepted these terms, but the moment they were understood in Japan a storm of public indignation sprang up and drove him from office. He was succeeded by Count Okuma, who approached the sixteen Powers separately and proposed that the revised Codes should be promulgated in English for two years before the abolition of Consular jurisdiction, and that foreign judges should sit in a majority in all cases affecting foreigners. In return he would throw open Japan to foreign residence and trade. To these proposals the United States, Germany, Russia and France agreed. Great Britain, unfortunately, still hung back. Again Japanese public opinion manifested the greatest hostility, and the natural demand was made that the question should be left for the decision of the Diet, which was just about to assemble for the first time. The

Cabinet resigned in a body, and a fanatic lay in wait for Count Okuma at the gate of the Foreign Office, threw a dynamite bomb at him, shattering one of his legs, and then and there cut his own throat and fell dead. It has been told me by a foreigner who was engaged at the Foreign Office on that day that public opinion was so charged with anger that everybody was expecting something dreadful to happen, and when the explosion was heard all present knew in a moment what it must be. Viscount Aoki succeeded Count Okuma as Minister for Foreign Affairs, and made new tentatives towards settling the Treaty Revision Question, but in vain. An anti-foreign feeling had now taken deep root, and the watchword of all parties was, "A treaty on terms of absolute equality." And that is what has taken place. Viscount Aoki has been more fortunate as Ambassador than as Foreign Minister, and he has concluded with Great Britain a treaty which gives to Japan everything that she desires. Treaties with the United States, Germany, France, and Russia will of course follow immediately. Japan acquires her complete judicial autonomy after a period of at least five years, when the treaty takes effect, and it remains in force for a period of twelve years. A revised tariff would go into operation a month after the exchange of ratifications, except for the "most favoured nation" clause in the Japanese treaties with other Powers; she will not, therefore, be able to avail herself of this until she has concluded similar treaties with them.

On the expiration of the treaty—that is to say, seventeen years from the present time—Japan comes into possession of her complete tariff autonomy also. During the next five years Japan agrees to issue passports, available for twelve months, to all accredited British subjects; and by the treaty the whole of Japan is thrown open to British trade, travel, and residence, and British subjects are placed in every respect on a par with Japanese, with certain exceptions. On the one hand, they are exempted from compulsory military service, and from any pecuniary burden in connection with it; and on the other,

they are not allowed to own land or to engage in the coasting trade, except between certain specified ports. Everything except land they may own in the interior, but that they can only acquire by lease, and according to the Japanese laws and customs these leases will probably be for thirty and fifty years. The prohibition of land-owning by foreigners will be seen when looked at from the point of view of the Japanese to be a reasonable measure of self-protection. If wealthy foreigners were allowed to acquire by purchase vast tracts of land in Japan it is easy to see how serious political and other difficulties might arise. Japanese capitalists could not enter into competition with the capitalists of Europe. By this treaty for the first time Japanese subjects are accorded in Great Britain the same rights and privileges as British subjects; this has hitherto been a matter of courtesy, and not of right. The Japanese Codes, as is well known, have been drawn up by European experts and are equal, theoretically, to any criminal and civil codes in the world; and during the five years which must elapse before foreigners come under their operation the Japanese judges will have a further considerable experience in the administration of them. Considering, moreover, that it is the very legitimate ambition of the Japanese so to act in all public matters as to be above the criticism of western nations, there is no reason to fear that any miscarriage of justice towards foreigners will ensue. Should the arrangement, however, prove unsatisfactory in any way, it must be remembered that the British Government were repeatedly offered by Japan terms of treaty revision which included foreign judges upon the Japanese Bench when the interests of foreigners were concerned, and that having refused these terms they have now accepted the present much less advantageous ones. So far as Great Britain is concerned it is the story of the Sibylline books: we have paid more in the end for less than we were offered at the beginning. But there can be no doubt whatever of the absolute justice of this treaty, and it should be a

matter of pride to us, no less than of satisfaction at the expediency of the act, that we have been the first nation to recognise the just claims of Japan to be regarded as a civilised country. Our hesitation to do so for many years produced much hard feeling against us, but this is now replaced by a feeling of grateful appreciation that we have at last led the way where other nations must inevitably follow. Thus Japan enters—first of all eastern countries—into the charmed circle of the civilised Powers, and the dearest wish of her heart is at length gratified.

The Japan of to-morrow has nothing to fear except from herself. There are certain signs of threatening dangers, however, which students of her history and critics of her institutions cannot overlook. The first of these springs from her very success in rivalling western nations in their manufacturing industries. While we have succeeded, after many struggles, in mitigating the horrors of the old factory system, and are still occupied in devising fresh safeguards for the future, Japan is complacently allowing identical evils to grow up in her midst. It is time for her to realise that even though her army and navy become the most powerful in the world, the title of "civilised" cannot properly apply to her so long as young children work twelve hours a day in her factories. The character of her people, to which is due in the last analysis every success that she has achieved, has sprung from the free development of individual character, and it is seriously threatened by the rapid growth of great manufacturing industries, which tend, when unrestricted, to reduce the individual man to a mere cog in the mechanism, and which eat up the lives of women and children. Upon this point I may be permitted to repeat what I have said before. When Japan rings with the rattle of machinery; when the railway has become a feature of her scenery; when the boiler-chimney has defaced her choicest spots as the paper-makers have already obliterated the delights of Oji; when the traditions of *yashiki* and *shizoku* alike are all finally engulfed in the barrack-

room; when her art reckons its output by the thousand dozen; when the power in the land is shared between the professional politician and the plutocrat; when the peasant has been exchanged for the "factory hand," the *kimono* for the slop-suit, the tea-house for the music-hall, the *geisha* for the *lion comique*, and the *daimio* for the beer-peer—Japan will have good cause to doubt whether she has made a wise bargain. Her greatest triumph will come, if ever, when she has shown that while adapting and even improving the western methods of influence and power, she is able to guard herself from falling into the slough of social and economical difficulties in which European and American societies are wallowing, and from which one may almost doubt whether they will succeed in emerging without leaving civilisation behind them for good.

The second danger lying ahead of Japan may spring from her own excessive zeal. She has been so marvellously successful that she may be apt to believe she cannot fail. "Let him that thinketh he standeth beware lest he fall." If the Japanese politician becomes enamoured of Utopias and panaceas; if he believes that, in the future as in the past, his own country can do in a decade what it has taken other nations a century to accomplish; if he does not realise that the difficulties ahead are infinitely greater and more trying than those which have been overcome, he may plunge Japan into a bottomless pit of troubles. There are still in modern Japan all the elements for civil explosion, and serious economic and political difficulties would undoubtedly bring these into action.

Excess of zeal has already brought about a virtual deadlock in the most vital institution of modern Japan—its Parliamentary system. This has hardly been in existence four years, yet during that time it has developed more than one sharp conflict between the Emperor and the deputies; the Diet has been several times prorogued and twice dissolved; it has expelled its President; it is split up into innumerable and almost incomprehensible factions; it has been the scene of many unseemly

demonstrations; and it has formally declared itself in direct conflict with the provisions of the Constitution of 1889. A majority of the Diet is bent upon securing the system of party Cabinets, which rise and fall in accordance with party votes. This the Constitution expressly avoids. The Japanese Cabinet is the Government of the Emperor; nominally he is its head, but actually he is only its figure-head; a majority, therefore, in appealing to him over the heads of the Cabinet, is striking a blow at the heart of the Constitution. The situation is a very difficult and even dangerous one, for representative government almost necessarily involves government by party, yet in the present fluid state of Japanese political thought, under a party system there would be no guarantee whatever of stability or continuity. Nor does Japan as yet seem to have produced any great party-leaders. Moreover, her politics shows an unfortunate tendency to violence. There is a class of unemployed rowdies, called *soshi*, descendants by practice of the old *ronins* and corresponding roughly to the "heelers" of Tammany, who hire themselves out regularly, especially at election times, to the highest bidder, for any disreputable purposes, from breaking up meetings to bludgeoning candidates, or even assassinating political opponents. When to all this is added the further fact that the great clan jealousies of ante-Restoration times are still smouldering, and that Satsuma and Choshu live in harmony chiefly because they divide political power between them, it will be seen that in her new-found politics, too, Japan may find many a danger to her national welfare. For myself I believe that when these dangers loom a little nearer and in their true proportions, the Japanese people will have wisdom and sobriety enough to avoid them, but no foreign friend of Japan should fail to sound a note of grave alarm.

Of all excessive zeal, however, the most dangerous will be excess of military zeal. There has always been a war party in Japan, and it has looked for years with eagerness to a struggle with China. This has now taken place,

and its results are not likely to be pacific; on the contrary, the party of a so-called "strong foreign policy" will be justified in the eyes of all men. And as there is no longer any eastern Power to fight, the "strong" party of the future can only turn its eyes towards some nation of the West. Lest it be thought that I am exaggerating Japanese confidence and ambition, I will quote the following extraordinary passage from a recent speech of no less distinguished a person than Count Okuma himself, ex-Minister for Foreign Affairs :—

"The European Powers are already showing symptoms of decay, and the next century will see their constitutions shattered and their empires in ruins. Even if this should not quite happen, their resources will have become exhausted in unsuccessful attempts at colonisation. Therefore who is fit to be their proper successors if not ourselves? What nation except Germany, France, Russia, Austria, and Italy can put 200,000 men into the field inside of a month? As to their finance, there is no country where the disposal of surplus revenue gives rise to so much political discussion. As to intellectual power, the Japanese mind is in every way equal to the European mind. More than this, have not the Japanese opened a way to the perfection of a discovery in which foreigners have not succeeded even after years of labour? Our people astonish even the French, who are the most skilful among artisans, by the cleverness of their work. It is true the Japanese are small of stature, but the superiority of the body depends more on its constitution than on its size. If treaty revision were completed, and Japan completely victorious over China, we should become one of the chief Powers of the world, and no Power could engage in any movement without first consulting us. Japan could then enter into competition with Europe as the representative of the Oriental races."

One of the best friends Japan has ever had, the man who knows her better than any other foreigner, has recently written that Japan stands in great need of a peace party at this moment. "Experience has taught us to dread one thing in Japan above all others—fashion. . . . It may seem premature to speak of this, but in truth we dread lest war become the fashion in Japan, so that success, instead of bringing contentment, may merely fire ambition. A peace party is wanted; that is to say, a party prepared to hold the nation back when the time for halting shall have fairly arrived." * Captain Brinkley further points out that the spectacle of the present war is not offered

* *The Japan Weekly Mail*, August 25, 1894.

gratis to western Powers, but that each pays for witnessing it the price of interrupted or crippled trade, and that they "will not sit idle if they see Japan fighting merely for lust of fighting or of conquest." Japan, if she is wise, will find in solving the great problems of peace, chief among which will be the education of the masses of her people up to the standard of profession and practice reached by her ruling and educated classes, a sufficient occupation for all her genius.

CHAPTER XXV.

ASIA FOR THE ASIATICS?

WHEN peace is concluded between Japan and China, the difficulties of the war—to speak in paradox—will begin. Up to the present time it has been plain sailing for everybody concerned in the struggle, directly and indirectly, except China, and her humiliation is a matter which no one except a partisan of savagery can regret for a moment. The time is rapidly approaching, however, when Japan must show her hand, and then she will find herself face to face, across the carcass of her defeated foe, with all the combined rivalry and mutual jealousies of the European Powers. That moment will be a momentous one for all parties, especially for Japan and for ourselves. It is, of course, a risky matter to prophesy concerning the next six months, since it is an open secret that no Foreign Office in Europe has any accurate knowledge of the conditions Japan will demand. Moreover, there are some aspects of the situation which cannot yet be even discreetly discussed. But so far as may be possible, the situation is one which Englishmen, of all people, should consider carefully beforehand, for upon its development hang very great issues for themselves.

There exists in Japan, in the minds of the intelligent among her citizens no less than among her publicists, her soldiers, and her diplomatists, a sentiment which is seldom mentioned there, and which, so far as I know, has hardly been hinted at in Europe. That sentiment is summed up in four words: Asia for the Asiatics. Herein, I am convinced, lie the germs of the most

momentous events in the relationships of nations since Napoleon Bonaparte was exiled to St. Helena. To appreciate this, let us first glance at the situation as a reasonable forecast pictures it.

It is assumed that Japan crushes China and is requested to table the terms on which she will make peace. These may be, first, the complete autonomy of Korea under Japanese protection, and with a Japanese force stationed at Wiju; second, an indemnity of £50,000,000; third, the occupation of Port Arthur as a strategical guarantee, and possibly the control of the Chinese Customs Office at Shanghai as a pecuniary guarantee, until the above sum is paid; fourth, the formal recognition of Japanese rights over the Liuchiu Islands, and the cession of Formosa. These would constitute a splendid set of conditions for the victor, and all things considered, they could hardly be described as extravagant, since with regard to Formosa, the most contentious point, China informed Japan in 1873 that she could not be responsible for an attack upon Japanese subjects by the Formosan people. But would even these conditions wholly satisfy the people of Japan? I do not hesitate to say they would not.

Japan has already fixed her eyes upon the future, and what she sees there alarms her, as well it may. Japan is a little country, with 40,000,000 of people. China is a huge country, with 350,000,000. China could easily bring 500,000 men of splendid physique to the colours; she could engage European or American officers and teachers to bring them gradually under military discipline and instruction; well paid and fairly treated the soldiers would be as good a mass of *Kanonenfutter* as need be; she could arm them with repeating rifles and quick-firing field-pieces; she could buy herself a new fleet and place it under the absolute control of foreign officers. It is inconceivable that even China, if she ever escapes from the consequences of this war, should not have learned her lesson at last. Then in ten or fifteen years' time she would be a really great Power. During this period Japan would have been compelled to increase her army and her

navy, and to support a constantly growing burden of military expenditure; and at its close the whole struggle would be to wage over again under conditions infinitely less favourable to herself. The leading vernacular journals have already declared frankly that this must not be permitted at any cost. Taking once more the Japanese point of view, it cannot be asserted that this is unreasonable. The question then recurs, what does Japan want?

This brings us back to the aforesaid undercurrent of national sentiment in Japan which would express itself, if it spoke at all, in the declaration, "Asia for the Asiatics." In other words, I am able to say from positive knowledge that the Government of Japan has conceived a parallel to the Monroe Doctrine for the Far East, with herself at its centre. The words of President Monroe, in his famous Message of 1823, in which this doctrine was first promulgated, express exactly, with the change of the one word I have italicised, the views of the chief Japanese statesmen of to-day: "With the existing colonies or dependencies of any European power we have not interfered, and shall not interfere; but with the governments which have declared their independence and maintained it, and whose independence we have, on great consideration and just principles, acknowledged, we could not view an interposition for oppressing them, or controlling in any other manner their destiny by any European power, in any other light than as a manifestation of an unfriendly disposition toward *Japan*." After all, Japan says—and the assertion is true—Asia is Asia, and between the Asiatic and the European, however keen may be the commercial instincts of the latter, or however progressive the temperament of the former, there is an everlasting gulf. We have found out—or we shall do so—in India, that in Mr. Kipling's words, "East is East, and West is West." We may like Japan and admire her and trade with her—and for my part I do not think it possible to know Japan without both liking and admiring her greatly; and Japan may like us and appropriate our knowledge,

and trade with us. But Englishman, American, Frenchman, or German is one kind of human being, and Japanese is another. Between them stands, and will stand for ever, the sacred and ineradicable distinction of race. China has, of course, been dimly inspired by this knowledge when she has denounced Japan as a traitor to Asia, and the Chinese community in Hongkong betrays the same feeling when it speaks of the "treachery" of the most enlightened Chinaman there because he possesses a double European education in law and medicine, wears European clothes, and married a European wife. But the retort of Japan is that the real traitor is China, because she has been content to remain the victim of the Occident instead of rousing herself to push back its advancing waves, if an opportunity should offer. And Japan is prepared to bring China back to Asiatic allegiance. It is not yet understood that if Japan's first object during the war has been to vanquish China, her second has been to avoid any step which might upset the Chinese dynasty. Had she wished to do this, nothing could have been easier. She could with almost a certainty of success have left Port Arthur and Wei-hai-wei to stew in their own juice, and have marched an expedition straight to Peking. But putting this supposition aside in deference to the views of some military experts, she could have despatched emissaries to China—and her *soshi* class would have provided numbers of them—to distribute throughout the more disaffected provinces placards calling upon the Chinese people to rise against their alien rulers, and assuring them that the war was only against the throne and not against the country; then, by providing with money and arms the rebels she would thus have created, she could, almost without striking a blow, have brought down the political organisation of China like a house of cards. In that event, however, China would have been a mere inert mass of members, without a head. Japan has no doubt whatever of her ability to re-organise China. The *Hochi Shimbun*, one of the leading Tokyo journals, recently said:—"The Chinese are the worst

governed people in the world, and consequently the easiest to bring under a foreign yoke. Besides, they have no strong national pride, like that entertained by the French, the German, the English, or the Japanese. Talleyrand's saying that "Italy is a mere geographical name" may be applied to China with much greater force. The Chinese, under the mild and civilised rule of Japan, would soon learn that they fare better thus than under their old masters. That would assuredly be the case in respect of material prosperity, and an improvement in such an important matter would in itself satisfy them." And in a later issue the same journal, which is not in the habit of treating serious matters thoughtlessly, has carried this consideration to the point of advocating it as a measure of practical politics. It declares that China is doomed to destruction, if not by Japan, then by Europe. It is, therefore, a question demanding deep thought whether Japan should not take possession of the big empire in the sequel of the present war. Should China fall a prey to one or more European countries, Japan's position would be greatly endangered. The *Hochi Shimbun* therefore entertains little doubt that it lies in the path of Japan's mission, as the peace-maintainer of the Orient, to bring China under the flag of the Rising Sun at the earliest possible opportunity. And the same confidence on behalf of Japan has been strikingly expressed in England:—

"Consider what a Japan-governed China would be. Think what the Chinese are; think of their powers of silent endurance under suffering and cruelty; think of their frugality; think of their patient perseverance, their slow, dogged persistence, their recklessness of life. Fancy this people ruled by a nation of born organisers, who, half-allied to them, would understand their temperament and their habits. The Oriental, with his power of retaining health under conditions under which no European could live, with his savage daring when roused, with his inborn cunning, lacks only the superior knowledge of civilisation to be the equal of the European in warfare as well as in industry. In England we do not realise that in a Japanese dynasty such a civilisation would exist: we have not yet learned to look upon the Mikado as a civilised monarch, as we look upon the Czar. Yet such he is undoubtedly. And under him the dreams of the supremacy of the Yellow Race in Europe, Asia, and even Africa, to which Dr. Pearson and others have given expression, would be no longer mere nightmares. Instead of speculating as to whether

England or Germany or Russia is to be the next world's ruler, we might have to learn that Japan was on its way to that position." *

Upon this Japanese ambition, however, there can be but one comment: Great Britain and Russia would never permit it. Yet if the Chinese Humpty-Dumpty fell from his wall nobody but Japan could put him together again; no western nation could attempt the task, even if her rivals would allow her to try. If the Emperor Kwang-hsü were hurled from his throne either from within or from without, foreign intervention would take place on the instant, and that is what Japan desires to avoid above all things. Hence her unwillingness to strike at Peking, hence British anxiety, hence the well-meant attempt at mediation, and hence, too, the powerful British fleet at the present moment in Chinese waters.

Japanese statesmen are keenly alive to the foregoing considerations. What is the alternative in their eyes? Obviously and certainly an alliance with a European Power. But with whom? Japan has already chosen in her own mind. She fears Russia; she distrusts France; Germany is not powerful enough at sea to count in this connection, even if her interests were large enough to justify a strong policy in the Far East. The ideal in foreign politics of the most enlightened Japanese is an alliance with Great Britain. In fact, without exaggeration and without the slightest discourtesy to Japan it may be said that her alliance with us is on offer. The commercial interests of the two countries are identical; we both desire the widest markets for our manufactures; cordial friendship reigns between us because we have shown our trust in Japan by making a treaty with her upon equal terms. And what Japan needs in an alliance is power at sea. Upon land in Asia no Asiatic nation can dream of opposing her; nor for the matter of that could any European nation fight her at the present time. But at sea she is weak, and upon the command of the sea, as we are

* *The St. James's Gazette*, Oct. 6, 1894.

slowly learning, national safety depends. Great Britain and Japan allied in the Far East would be irresistible. The one would command the sea, the other would dominate the land: the British Fleet would keep communications open, and nothing could resist the troops of the Emperor. With such a union the Korean Channel would become a second Dardanelles, and the Sea of Japan would become the Russian Black Sea of the East. In return for our alliance Japan would willingly see Great Britain occupy either Wei-hai-wei or Chusan as her northern naval base, and Canton as her opportunity of commercial expansion; Japan taking Formosa and holding Port Arthur. As an ally Japan would be faithful, brave, and powerful; and the Anglo-Japanese alliance would impose peace and offer freedom of trade. It would not, like France, devise every pitiful fiscal expedient to exclude all manufactures except its own protected ones, nor handicap sick and suffering foreigners by a differential hospital tariff.

What are the alternatives to this union of interests? They are two. First, Japan will ally herself with France; or if not with France then with Russia, France regarding the operation with a friendly eye. A Franco-Japanese alliance would doubtless be received in France with acclamation, for it would be aimed directly at Great Britain, and France would get as her share of the bargain the occupation of the Chinese province of Yunnan, and thus the dream of Garnier of opening the markets of Southern China through Tongking would at length be realised. Against France and Japan combined we should be helpless in the Far East, except at the cost of a great war upon which no British statesman would embark. And it would not be long before a Franco-Japanese-Chinese *Zollverein* would close the markets of China to our goods. That would be an end of our influence and our trade in a part of the world where, given a modicum of wisdom and courage, it is our destiny to play a predominant part in the future.

In the second place, if the alliance were between Japan and Russia, France would get almost as much for her share, while the advantages to Russia would be colossal. As I have explained in another chapter, it is Russia that Japan has feared in the past; indeed, I may go further and at the risk of being charged with indiscretion add that the plans of Japan for hostilities with Russia are as complete as they were for her occupation of Korea. For years it has been in the mind of certain Japanese statesmen to propose to China at the fitting opportunity an alliance whose ultimate object should be to drive Russia back from the Far East. The Japanese Staff have in their possession the most detailed plans for the taking of Vladivostok and the cutting off of the wedge of Russian territory which intervenes between Manchuria and the sea. This done, the Japanese would propose to China that Kirin-ula should be made into a great fortress, at the termination of a line of railway, as a base from which to hold Russia for ever in check. This, however, would be a *pis aller* of Japanese politics, and would be dictated alike by anger at England and by fear for the future. Russia has long desired to absorb Manchuria, with its vast potential riches, and to establish herself at Port Arthur. This is well known to those whose business it is to know such things, and it explains the willingness of Russia to promise to take no step in Korea. This is what Russia would gain by an alliance with Japan; France would get something to "keep her sweet," as Orientals say; crippled China would be a mere *corpus* for Japanese trade; Wei-hai-wei, the native city of Shanghai, and Formosa would be Japanese; and with Port Arthur Russian, and Yunnan French, where would England be?

These are not dreams. If they seem so, it is because there has been no rearrangement of the map of Europe on a large scale for so long that we have lost the habit of considering such eventualities. The collapse of China, however, lays the Far East as open to the gambits of international rivalry as a chess-

board when the four files face one another for the game. If they are dreams to-day, any one of them—so far as Japan is concerned—may be a reality to-morrow; and since I regard the situation as one of the utmost gravity for Great Britain, I may perhaps venture to take one step more, and present as a basis for the consideration of those who are better informed or upon whose shoulders the responsibility will rest, my own view of what the action of England should be.

The Anglo-Russian *entente*, by which Lord Rosebery has achieved an undoubted triumph of diplomacy (supposing it to last), is somewhat of a disappointment to Japan, but it leaves the way open for a solution of the Far Eastern question in her interests no less than in those of Russia and ourselves. In all the country north of the southern frontier of China there are virtually only three great interests: those of Great Britain, Russia, and Japan. The object, therefore, of any arrangement should be the combination of these three. In this there should be no serious difficulty, since, in the first place, the interests of the three are fortunately not conflicting; and, second, since the ends aimed at are to the injury of no other party, a moral justification is not lacking, and therefore there need be no hesitation in defying opposition. Let us consider first the case of Japan. By the terms of an Anglo-Russian-Japanese understanding she would receive in the first place the virtual suzerainty of Korea; second, whatever reasonable indemnity she chooses to impose upon China; third, the cession of Formosa; fourth, the Chinese navy, which she may capture. Fifth, there need be no hesitation in allowing her to collect the Customs at the port of Shanghai until the indemnity is paid. And finally, she would have the inestimable advantage of being free from fear of China in the future. Next consider the case of Russia. Her share would be the triangle of territory around which her Siberian Railway is at present planned to run; this would then proceed in a straight line from Verkhne Udinsk or Kiakhta to its terminus on the coast, across a district

probably more capable of development and possessing greater natural wealth than any other part of the Far East. Second, she would of course have to be provided with a winter port at the terminus of her railway, and to this it would be necessary for Japan to consent. No great concession, however, would be here involved, since, as I have said elsewhere, it is utterly out of the question to suppose that when her railway is finished Russia will stop short at a port frozen for five months in the year, whatever may be the cost of procuring a better. Third, Russia would be freed for ever from the fear of China along the three thousand miles of her weak and hardly defensible frontier. Finally, what would be the position of Great Britain under this arrangement? First, she would secure her indispensable northern naval base at Chusan, Wei-hai-wei, or elsewhere. Second, the vast markets of the whole of China would be thrown open to the whole world, and she would have her customary predominance in them. Third, she would be allowed to construct a railway from British Kowloon to Hongkong, and the development of the province of Kwangtung and the city of Canton would be placed under her charge. Fourth, the Government of India would be given a free hand in Thibet. Fifth, all anxieties—and they are many and heavy—with regard to her future in the Far East would be happily removed. To an arrangement of this kind the powerful sympathy of the United States would hardly be wanting.

This is a moment for courageous and far-seeing statesmanship, a moment to admit frankly the existence of our bitter enemies, and a moment, therefore, to seek for ourselves interested friends. France in the Far East will always be our opponent. Whatever we propose at the present time—this is neither a supposition nor a secret—Germany will oppose. It is therefore the imperative duty of our statesmen to seek an alliance elsewhere on fair terms. Moreover, this is our last opportunity in that part of the world. If not we, then with absolute certainty it will be others and our enemies who will

profit. Once more, at the risk of wearying the reader, let me beg him not to forget that we already have the right which comes to us from possessing beyond all comparison the predominance of trade and foreign population in the Far East, and that whatever territory comes under our influence we throw open freely to all the world. The ball of a great opportunity is at our feet. *Aegre offertur, facile amittitur.* I am well aware that at the present moment the ideal of our Foreign Office in the Far East as elsewhere is the old-fashioned one that has often served us so well before—the maintenance of the *status quo*. But a *status quo* maintained by England and Russia, with a victorious and foiled Japan outside it, presents to my mind the aspect of a slumbering volcano.

SIAM.

CHAPTER XXVI.

BANGKOK AND ITS PEOPLE.

WHEN the present Tsar of Russia visited Siam in 1891, he was met outside the bar of the Bangkok River by a large European-built Siamese man-of-war with heavy guns, and was conveyed to the Royal Palace in a Siamese State Barge of Oriental magnificence, a hundred feet long, with eighty gilded paddles and gorgeous decorations. His amazement, for he had expected to find a land of jungle and peasant, fitly represents not only the ignorance of the world about Siam and her resources, but also the ease with which the realities of her condition have always been concealed by the speciousness of her outward display.

The ordinary traveller will also obtain at the very mouth of the river his first insight (as he will imagine it to be) into the reality of Siamese progress from her ancient characteristics of a tropical jungle and a down-trodden people. For whether you approach from Singapore or from Hongkong, your first vision of this land of the paradoxical and the bizarre is a wide river-mouth edged apparently with endless swamp and fringed with miles of waving and impenetrable attap palms, sending forth swarms of vigorous mosquitoes to repel the intrusive foreigner. But at the true entrance of the river you discover two large forts, containing the latest developments of harbour defence—big guns, disappearing carriages, and masked batteries. And this strange contrast, this shock of false relationships, this mingling of west and east—the one real, interesting, and

living, the other sham, pretentious, and dead—constantly faces you in Siam.

The bar of the Bangkok River is an exceedingly difficult obstacle; the channel itself is so constantly shifting, the workings of the tide in this narrowing end of the great funnel of the Gulf of Siam are so perplexingly intricate, and the effects of the variations of wind upon the tides are so great, that a very intimate and constant familiarity with the river will alone enable any vessel to enter. The sagacious Foreign Minister of the Siamese Government, Prince Devawongse Varoprakar, once replied to an Englishman who asked why the removal of the bar was never included among his projects of reform, "Perhaps for the same reason that you do not welcome the proposal for a Channel Tunnel." The French gunboats, when forcing their entrance to the Menam in July, 1893, were fully alive to this difficulty, and though the Siamese Government had cut off the supply of pilots from foreign men-of-war by proclamation, they cleverly secured the services of the best of the Bangkok pilots by making their entrance close upon the heels of a vessel trading under the French flag. Even at high tide, it is only possible for ships drawing twelve or thirteen feet to get over the bar; the cargoes of the large trading vessels being brought outside to them in sailing lighters and Chinese junks.

As you pass into the actual river, there gradually comes into view one of the most striking pictures of this eastern wonderland—a little island lying midway in the broad expanse of stream, bearing upon its scanty head a pinnacle of glistening white, a lofty Buddhist pagoda with attendant cloisters, shrines, and chapels, with roofs of many-tinted tiles. It is an idyllic picture, a fitting adytum to the shrine of truest Buddhism—Siam, the land of monasteries, the loyal guardian of the Faith at its purest, the scene of its return to the more rationalistic, and, in fact, originally simple elements. On your right, upon the low-lying eastern bank appears the village of Paknam, "the mouth of the waters," whose portly governor, Phya Samudh,



BANGKOK : "THE VENICE OF THE EAST."

was certainly one of the most remarkable of my many eastern acquaintances; the holder of one of the highest ranks of Siamese nobility and officialdom; a man of mixed but chiefly Chinese origin; at the age of ten boot-black to a British mariner; at fifty, confidant, factotum, and counsellor to the Royal Prince-Ministers of Siam; owner of four wealthy rice-mills; the official cicerone and entertainer of most foreign visitors to Siam; speaking with equal ease and native force, English, Siamese, Malay, and various dialects of Chinese.

A single railway runs now from Paknam to the capital, sixteen miles by land. This line saves some three hours of time, as against the tortuous windings of the Menam, and affords a striking panorama of the wide plantations, the rich gardens, the muddy paddy-fields, and the humble peasant-life which make up the real Siam that the hasty traveller so seldom sees behind the shifting scenes of politics and progress in the capital. But the water-way is the true highway in this land of canals; and as the ship breasts the current of the river in the early morning, you may look upon the awakening of Siamese daily life in all its primitive simplicity. The yellow-robed priest, just risen from his early orisons, passes in his slight canoe from door to door upon the riverside, to gather the daily offerings of rice and food in the iron alms-bowl of the Buddhist mendicant. The chattering women, with their large wicker sun-hats, standing to their oars in gondola fashion, with stalwart strokes urge along their laden boats of fruit and betel to the floating markets. The ubiquitous Chinaman paddles his tiny dug-out, filled with much-loved greasy pork. The children play in the water, or swim recklessly in the wash of the big "fire-boat." The father munches his early rice and fish on the floor of one of the quaint floating houses, with pointed roofs of thatch, built upon shaky rafts of bamboo, that line the banks of the river in endless rows, and form perhaps the most distinctly characteristic feature of this novel scene. And the heavy junk-rigged lighters sail down, with their gesticulating Celestial crews, carrying the cargoes

of rice or teak to the traders in the Roads at Ko-si-chang, the island anchorage and health resort some sixty miles away.

On dropping anchor in mid-stream at this strange town of Bangkok, one realises at once that it is to trade, and trade alone, that Siam has owed, and must ever owe, her chance of figuring among the people of the East. To the silent palm-groves and virgin jungles of 1850, have succeeded to-day the forest of masts, the towering chimneys, and the humming "godowns" of the pressing British trader. Rice-mills and saw-mills, docks and ship-yards, stores and banks, houses and schools, alike display the energy of the Anglo-Saxon, hand in hand with the industry of the Mongol, forcing new life into native indolence.

On arriving at the Merchants' Wharf or the Hotel Quay, or when looking up one's acquaintances in the busy town, one's first question is, Where is Siam? where are the Siamese? Everywhere are Chinamen, or Malays, or Indians. Do the Siamese have no part in all this scene of activity and commerce? A very small share. In one's wanderings one sees at first but little of Siam and the Siamese. Indeed the "downtown" *farang*—the Siamese word for every foreigner—though full of rumours, gossip, stories, and his own ideas about the Siamese and their ways, the Palace and its intrigues, the princes and their policy, knows practically nothing about the real Siam, almost completely shut off, as he is, from observation of its primary elements, and misled as to the intricacies of its internal condition and prospects. That this is indeed the case is never for a moment lost sight of by the wily Siamese themselves; and it is with many a smile that they watch the futile efforts of the foreign element to follow the workings of the native mind. But they receive blandly the advice and suggestions of foreign Consuls, as the latter endeavour to apprehend the apparent directions of eastern methods in general and of Siamese plans in particular, from the impossible standpoint of western criticism and European aims. And when it is remembered that the

Foreign Legations, the Ministers and Consuls of foreign nations, are all situated in the midst of this atmosphere of ignorance and misconception, commonly called "down town," and that with the exception of the French Consular officials (who use special means for getting information from behind the scenes) they see nothing whatever of the inside life of Siam, nor ever gain the confidence of her Princes, it will be easily understood how difficult it has been for the Foreign Offices of Europe to be alive to the realities of the situation from time to time, or to foresee and to forestall the sudden developments, whether of diplomacy or mere intrigue, that work such effective changes under an Oriental government.

In the solar system of Siam, the Palace is the sun. "Up town," when the Palace awakes, everything awakes; when the Palace sleeps, everything sleeps—officialdom, politics, work, duties, pleasures. Whereas, whatever happens in the Palace, whatever intrigues take place, whether French threatenings are being resisted in the Cabinet, British Consuls hoodwinked in the Foreign Office, or German Concessionaries browbeaten in the bureau; though cruelties are being perpetrated in the gaols, or exactions plotted in the Ministries; though unspeakable blunders are committed in the Departments, and the whole administrative machine seems going to pieces,—"down town" life and its commerce go on the same. The foreign element is, in fact, completely outside the real life of Siam, and this although it is solely due to foreign pressure that Siam has become what she is, and that the Palace has any policy to devise or resources to expropriate. To the Palace, therefore, one must speedily find one's way, to see things as they are, or in any sense to know Siam. I shifted my quarters to the city proper within twenty-four hours of my arrival, and for nearly three months I lived in the very centre of it, within a stone's throw of the Palace wall. To the opportunity of doing this I owe whatever intimate knowledge of Siam I possess.

As you drive through the one main street to the city wall you

see many of the worst aspects of Siamese town life—the pawn-shops and brothels, the spirit-dens and gambling-houses, the reeking alleys and the heaps of refuse, the leprous beggars and the lounging peons. The old wall of a hundred years ago still surrounds the older city. You pass through it half-way between the foreign quarter and the Palace. Its lofty gateways, however, are never shut or guarded, and indeed the gates are almost too rusty to be closed. The Siamese have little reverence for the antique, and invariably prefer convenience to sentiment; so openings are freely cut, battlements removed, and towers destroyed, whether for admitting a road into some prince's property or for erecting electric installations for the Palace. As soon as you have passed the gateway and entered the city proper, you begin to realise the effective presence of the Siamese Government and to feel the pervading influence of royalty. The broad and well-kept road, the rows of new-built houses and rapidly-spreading shops, with the stuccoed walls of palaces and prisons, of barracks and offices, display the Hausmann-like changes that King Chulalongkorn I. has effected in the outward appearance of his capital, during the twenty-five years that have elapsed since first he wore the crown as a lad of fifteen.

Most of the princes, the two dozen brothers and half-brothers of the King, who practically control all the executive and administrative departments of State, inhabit large houses, built for them, usually at the King's expense, in foreign style. But the Royal Palace itself has been cleverly contrived by an English architect in collaboration with Siamese artificers to combine Oriental picturesqueness and pinnacles with European comfort and solidity. The lofty and graceful pointed spires of the Grand Halls of Audience are conspicuous from a long way off; and the gleaming tiles of the golden Pagoda and the many coloured roofs of the Royal Temple within the Palace walls give a richer effect than anything to be found east of Calcutta.

The arrangement of the Palace and its buildings is an em-



THE HALLS OF AUDIENCE, BANGKOK.

bodiment in brick of the policy of King Chulalongkorn's reign—which has been to draw the power, and consequently the wealth, from the hands of the once great nobles and old family dignitaries, and to concentrate it in himself alone; to delegate it to members of his own intimate family circle, and to them only; and this not permanently but provisionally, at his own sovereign will and changing pleasure. By this means he has attained the very quintessence of centralisation, and realised in the completest sense a State in which the King is *de facto* as well as *de jure* the sole source and repository of power.

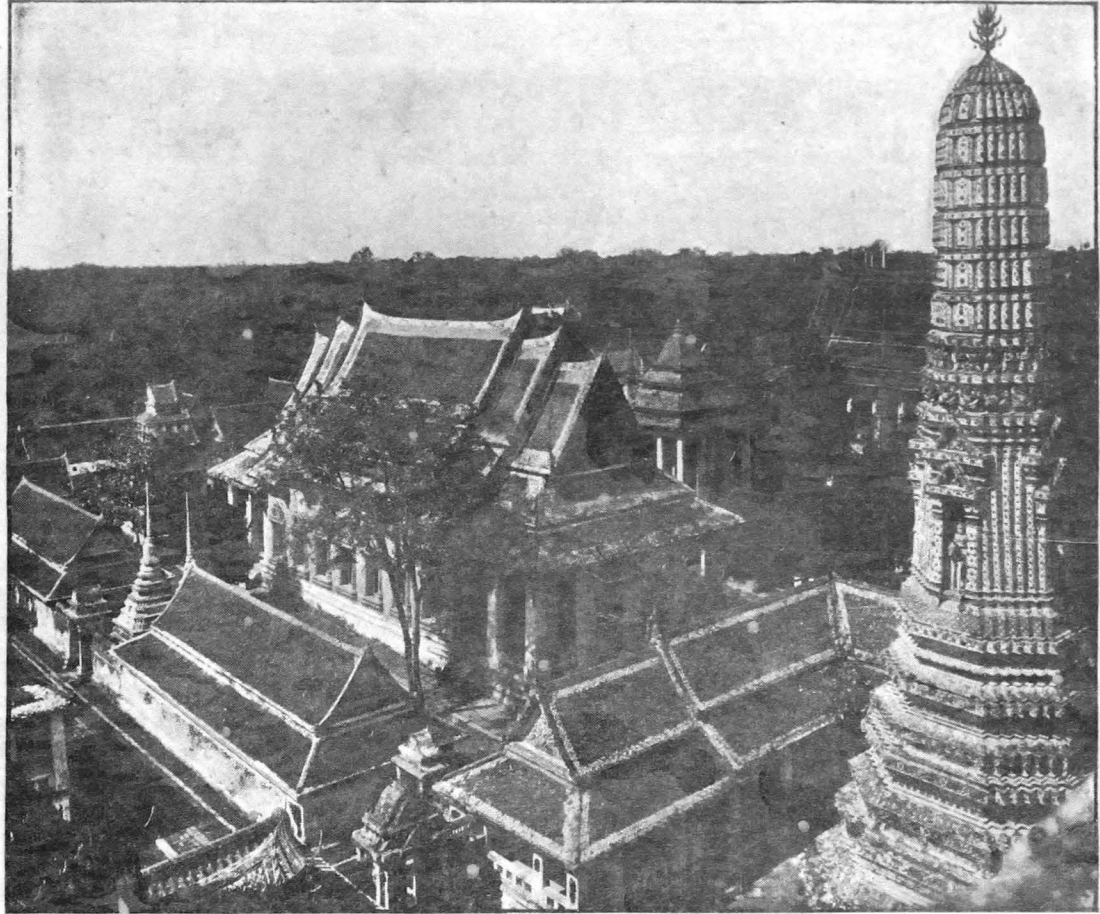
Round the Palace buildings proper, enclosed by lofty walls and solid gateways guarded by day and closed at night, are grouped almost all the offices of the various Government departments. And right in the heart and centre of this charmed circle of officialdom is the Royal Grand Palace, of which the audience halls and State apartments form the outer and only visible portion. The inner portion of the Palace—the real dwelling-place of his Majesty—is entirely concealed behind these. It is invisible from any point on the north, south and east, and entirely shielded on the river side by cleverly arranged walls and courts which effect their purpose without suggesting their object. The King is the only man within this seething city of humanity; alone—if ever a man were alone—amidst a crowded population of none but women and children; a complete female town with its houses, markets, streets, prisons, and courts. This city of women is known among the Siamese as *Kang Nai*, "The Inside," and etiquette even forbids any allusion to it. Here the King lives his life, and has deliberately elected (for it is by no means a necessary custom) to spend the greater part of his time; his excursions "outside" amidst life and male humanity, once frequent and enjoyed, have gradually decreased, till in the last five years he has seldom exceeded an hour of formal audience daily, and during the past twelve months he has not averaged an hour in a fortnight. This seclusion of the King, even in its milder form of five or six years ago, must

yawns of sleepy clerks kept there the whole night in idleness; till at length one might come suddenly upon the Royal Prince. Minister himself, at supper with some favoured gossip, or intent upon a vigorous and exciting game of chess, an occupation at which he is *facile princeps*, as in most of the other games of skill that his Royal Highness affects, and on which he spends a very considerable portion of his "office hours." In the meantime suitors might wail, and Consuls rave at the needless delays, the perpetual procrastinations, which often continued from week to week and even from month to month; and usually wearied out, as they were intended to do, the unfortunate foreigners. Go where one would, and when one would, in this strange medley of departments, bureaus, and government offices, every passage and every room was all unswept and littered with the daily mess, the cast-off cigarettes, the decaying betel-nut, and all the indescribable *débris* of the countless hangers-on and ragged retainers who attend the footsteps of every official. In not a single office but that of Prince Damrong—a brilliant exception to the general slovenliness of Siamese ministers in this, as in many respects—did I observe the slightest desire for neatness and order, or even an idea of common cleanliness. One naturally expects great things, for instance, of the far-famed White Elephants that live at the gates of the royal palace, to whom fable and a credulous European public have attributed an absurd sanctity. But they are in reality in a plight that would shame the bear-cage of a wandering circus; tended by slouching ruffians who lie about in rags and tatters, eking out a scanty livelihood by weaving baskets, and begging a copper from every visitor in return for throwing a bunch of seedy grass or rotting bananas to the swaying beasts which raise their trunks in anticipation of the much-needed addition to their scanty diet. Such is the Palace of the wealthy and progressive King of Siam.

When one thinks of the swarms of women and children that spend their whole lives "inside," and the innumerable officials and hangers-on that throng the "outside" of this wondrous

palace, when one realises that it boasts of no drains except a simple trench that was dug for surplus rain floods, but which has unfortunately been made to slope the wrong way and so collects the flood-water into three-foot pools at the very gateway itself, while every domestic or sanitary arrangement is conspicuous by its entire absence, and is supplied, as one's senses inform one, by nature's means alone,—one begins to wonder indeed at the prolonged exemption from epidemics that seems to have favoured the happy-go-lucky Siamese. But on gala days, and above all when any *farang* visitor is to be dazzled, they set to work strenuously, and soon with hasty brooms, scurrying officials, weary prisoners, half-paid coolies, and many lashes, a general effect is produced, striking in its mass of colour, effective in its architectural pose, and brilliant in its Oriental profusion of "humanity in procession."

Back from the busy parts of the city, Bangkok is intersected by pleasant bye-paths and the winding canals all overhung with tropical verdure; so much so that the whole city, when surveyed from the height of the "Great Golden Mountain"—an artificial brick pagoda some two hundred feet high—appears, as my photograph shows, to be one mass of trees dotted with occasional protruding spires. To turn off into the first side-path and enter the compound of some petty official, is to penetrate at a step into the patriarchal state. Around you stand the wooden houses, erect on piles to raise them above the mud, or even water, which is always present during the rainy season; reached by simple ladders, sufficient for man but impossible for beast. The women are pounding in the mortars with heavy wooden hammers beneath the floors of the houses, or winnowing the brown-skinned paddy in great wicker pans, in the middle of the courtyard. Pariah dogs are prowling round, snarling and howling over the refuse of many weeks of primitive Siamese housekeeping. In the centre dwelling sits the master, full in the open doorway, and whether he is making his toilet, or eating his dinner, or performing his duties, he is



WAT CHANG, BANGKOK, FROM A PINNACLE.

always surrounded with servants and visitors, wives and mothers, in unconcerned proximity; for Siam is a land where privacy is unknown and a desire for it unfelt. In the adjoining dwellings, upon the same platforms, are the households of his various sons and their wives, or more often of his daughters and their husbands; for in Siam a young man goes to live in his mother-in-law's compound without any misgiving.

But it is in the "Wats"—the temples, or monasteries, as they should rather be called—that we discover the really finer parts of Bangkok. These buildings occupy the best sites, and afford the most beautiful views of the town. Built for the most part in the days when roads and carriages were unknown, they nestle among the trees upon the banks of the innumerable canals. Amidst shady cloisters, frescoed in brilliant colours with the fabled incidents of Brahmin polytheism, and glaring with the hell-pictures of later Buddhist mythology, stands the Temple itself, lofty, cool, and dim, with threefold or fourfold roofs and soaring rafters and marble floors, where dreamy monks recite in impressive sing-song the lengthy formulæ of their world-old faith, while placid Buddhas tower above them in endless calm, or stretch their length in huge figures of sixty or seventy feet of gilded brickwork, through the gloomy columns.

Around and outside these more sacred precincts stand rows on rows of little dwellings for the priests, where day by day they practise their orisons or instruct their pupils, or pursue their meditations. But it is on festival days, and on the weekly Sacred Day, the seventh and fifteenth of each moon, that these Wats become the scene of activity and resound with the hum of many voices. In Siam, as elsewhere, the active ministrations of religion seem chiefly sought by the softer sex, perhaps with more reason than in Europe, since here the men will work off each his own necessary portion of religion in the few weeks or months, or occasionally years, that almost every Siamese man spends in the monastic order, at some period of

his life. Thus on "Wan Pra" may be seen a crowd of women with laughing children coming in all simplicity, like mediæval Christians to the weekly Mass, to gain their humble share of hard-won "merit" by devotion, and if possible to escape the eternal handicap which Buddhism lays upon their sex.

The only official call that a Siamese makes upon the rites of the church is at his cremation, the greatest event in his career. It is a genuinely impressive experience to see the humble ceremonies of a peasant cremation, to hear the yellow-robed priests intoning with Gregorian sonorousness the office of the dead over the leaping flames, and to watch them as they repeat the orisons from hour to hour throughout the night over the smouldering ashes, with weird cadence, in the strange rolling accents of the old Pali, till at dawn they make their mournful search upon the pyre for the charred remnants of frail humanity.

The cremation of the rich and great is a different affair altogether. At the death of a noble, and still more of some member of the Royal Family, a cremation, which is then held some months afterwards, becomes a public holiday, a brilliant gala week with dances and shows and theatres and every form of national amusement and delight; and so adds one more to the wonderful list of high-days and holidays which the ease-loving Siamese contrives to fit into his year. Festivals are indeed the chief business of Siamese life. I was a spectator of one specially gorgeous festival in the king's summer palace up the river at Bang-pa-in. It was a right royal pageant in honour of the yearly *fête* of *Loi Katong*, a sort of Feast of Lanterns, when every stream and waterway sparkled with the little lamps and tapers set afloat by the simple worshipper, to "make merit," in happy ignorance that he thus perpetuated the primeval invocation of his Aryan forefathers to the bounty of the waters which alone can give the rich harvest. In tiny cockle-shells and stately barges, in fragile emblems and in towering monsters, the glinting line of lights was borne along,

amidst the blare of trumpets and the shouts of the throng, till it disappeared into the darkness, and left the light-hearted Siamese to count up the days to the next of those recurring holidays.

It is only during the vast preparations for some Palace function—a gorgeous cremation, the brilliant ceremony of the “top-knot cutting” when the Crown Prince comes of age, or the annual visits to the Wats—that one first perceives that the indolent Siamese *can* work, and work with a will, too, to build up towering erections of bamboo and thatch and tinsel and gaudy colouring of waving festoons, with an activity and ingenuity that pass one’s comprehension, till one happens upon the explanation. It is that the great officials and even the royal princes are themselves directing and urging on with voice and hand the work of raising these ephemeral shows, which appeal at once to their keenest sense of pleasure and their fondest hopes for royal favour. It has been well said that the Siamese habit is to work at play, and to play at work; I shall have something to say upon the latter head later on, but the subject of cremations offers one of the finest examples of the former. There is a fine square of open and level greensward just in front of the Grand Palace, covering some four or five acres. On the death of any child or near relative of the reigning or previous monarch, this ground is covered with an immense erection of buildings, which occupy often five or six months and tens of thousands of hands in building, and are on view during perhaps five or six days of the ceremony, and in actual use only during the five or six hours of the burning. They are then entirely demolished within a few days, and the whole process is begun over again with entirely new material at the next royal death. The expense involved each time is almost incredible. If we include the accompanying lavish distribution of presents, both of Siamese money and of goods ordered from Europe by hundreds of cases, it sometimes amounts to as much as fifteen thousand catties—say, £75,000. And

this in a country where the peasant is taxed nearly fifty per cent. on every article of necessity; where official salaries are generally in arrear; while defence, education, public works, and other reforms, are always starved on the plea of lack of revenue.

But to see a Royal Siamese Ceremony at its best, one must witness the pageants connected with the varied innumerable sacrosanct events in the life of the Heir Apparent himself, or indeed of any other of the full Celestial princes—*Chow Fah*, as they are called—*i.e.*, those sons of the King whose mothers are of royal blood.* There is first the giving of presents to the royal parents at his birth—a list of the money value of each, with the donor's name, being carefully registered as a guide for future royal favours. Then there is the top-knot cutting at the age of twelve, followed by his entrance into the noviciate of the Buddhist monastic order at thirteen, and into the full priesthood at twenty-one; besides the minor *fêtes* at marriages or the bestowals of higher ranks and titles; and above all, the final festival of his cremation. Every one of these events is the occasion for immense processions and gorgeous pageants, entailing a complete cessation of all Government business for a week or ten days at least, and its confusion and delay for a much longer period before and after. To crown all, there is the expense involved in the dresses, the lavish *largesses*, and the almsgiving, besides the heavy penalty of the forced and unpaid labour of most of the unfortunate workmen employed. So that each one of the little “sons of heaven”—whose number is now rising seven, as the present King began his family rather early in life (at thirteen he was the father of two children)—has been estimated to cost his faithful and long-suffering country from ninety to a hundred thousand pounds *in festivals alone*. Nobles and princes, by the way, pay nothing towards taxes. I should add that any lack of the necessary total sum is made up through “loyal contributions,” consisting of “voluntary” abatements of the monthly salaries of the officials, since it is



A TEMPLE ON A CANAL, BANGKOK.

an absolute necessity that the full requirements be forthcoming for these royal and national amusements.

In a people so averse to work of any kind, one would expect to find but few popular amusements, and those not of the nature of violent exercise. And this is the case. There are practically but two forms of amusement throughout the whole of Siam—gambling and the theatre. The former is the great national passion; every large town has its nightly lottery of incredible proportions. The possession of the Bangkok Lottery license brings a great fortune in about five years, and the Government draws one of its largest revenues from this source. Gambling-houses, and their natural concomitants and next-door neighbours the pawn-shops, are as numerous in Bangkok as public-houses in London, and fifty times as pernicious in their effect on the people; and this deadly national trait can but increase so long as a native government prefers to use it as a source of profit rather than to check it as a national curse.

Of theatres and theatre-going a volume might be written. To an ordinary Siamese it is the height of happiness to sit jammed in a dense crowd on the floor, from seven p.m. to two a.m., watching the same play—or rather portion of a play, for it is a matter of several such nights in succession before the drama is completed. The plays are usually adaptations from old Hindu mythology; the plot and every incident of it are familiar to all in the audience—the more so, the better. The attraction consists in the manner of its presentment, the long-drawn tension of the “love” episodes, the realism of the *dénoûments*, the gorgeousness of the dresses, and the minute skill of the numerous dances. The actors, with the exception of a few clowns, are all young girls. They are subjected to stringent training from the age of four years, and in their prime at seventeen and eighteen years of age are a possession of immense money value to their “owners,” in spite of the much-vaunted but unenforced slavery reforms of the present reign. The dances are entirely posture-dances, great pleasure being taken in the abnormal

bending-back of elbows, wrists, ankles, and finger-joints, which is carried to an extent that would be impossible to even a "double-jointed" European. The dances are accompanied by loud music from the orchestra, assisted sometimes by the hard voices of a chorus of some twenty old women, and heightened in the impassioned moments by the voices of the *danseuses* themselves. I was permitted to take the accompanying photograph of two of the leading *prime donne* of Bangkok, in a company belonging to a most distinguished nobleman, a personal friend of the King, whose theatrical performances are always the most popular feature of all the great national and other holidays, the spectators numbering many hundreds at a time. There is nothing to pay at a Siamese theatre, for the owner is recouped by special donations from wealthy patrons, proportionate to the popularity and success of the performances, while the "company," like most other native employees in this strange land, alike in palace and cottage, are not wage-earners but house-chattels, that is, domestic slaves.

o The fascinating subject of Siamese ceremonies, which, as I have said, comprise three-fourths of the whole interest of life to a Bangkok Siamese, has led me away from my description of Bangkok itself. Its plan as a town, however, is so simple that a few words will suffice. It is situated at about twelve miles distance from the sea in a direct line, sixteen by rail, and some thirty by water, and lies right on the banks of the really fine river which has called it into being, to wit, the Menam Chow Phya. Menam, "the mother of waters," is the generic name for all rivers, and "Chow Phya" is the highest title of nobility, the Lord Duke; as it were. The city itself possesses a lengthy official name, couched as are all Siamese titles in the ancient Pali language of the Buddhist Scriptures, the first portion of it meaning "the City of the Great White Angels." Grandiloquent titles, by the way, are a strong point in Siam both for places and for officials, an arrangement which one might almost regard as a striking instance of compensation, since the

importance of the places is usually particularly small, and the duties of the nobles are chiefly conspicuous by their absence. I make this explanation in passing, because otherwise the seventeen-syllabled name of the Palace cook, and the even longer one of the King's barber, might possibly mislead an innocent foreigner into ascribing a wholly fictitious excellence to the cuisine of the one or the dexterity of the other.

The city is practically confined to the left bank of the river; the portion on the right bank which fifty years ago was the centre of power and activity as the abode of the great Regent and his immense and once influential family, has now fallen into complete decay, and is purposely left in neglect, as it might otherwise recall a strong *régime* that is gone, and suggest some unwelcome and uneasy memories of things that the present reigning House may well wish buried in the past.

There is one main road some five or six miles long in excellent condition in its upper portion (that is, where it may have to face the criticism of Majesty itself), which runs parallel with the river and leads from "down town" right up to and through the city proper. The streets of Bangkok will agreeably astonish the visitor from Canton or Peking by their width, their condition, and comparative cleanliness; while the excellent state of the many cross-roads also in the city, such at least as are near the Palace, speak well for the efforts made by the Government during the past ten years in this direction. These owe their existence to the energy of the various European employees of the Siamese Public Works Department. There is, of course, the typical Eastern conglomeration of filth and humanity in hovels and alleys and fetid bazaars; but to see it one must deliberately seek it and leave the ordinary roads of traffic, for it is practically confined to the one long gruesome stretch of Chinese bazaars and native dens of various sorts, of evil odours and still worse repute, known as Sampeng. But even this plague-centre has now been cut into and ventilated by several wide transverse roads, in consequence of the fortunate recurrence recently of

some fires which destroyed hundreds of the close-packed shanties.

Along the whole length of the main road runs a well-kept electric tramway, invariably filled to overflowing with chattering passengers of every description, and paying to its lucky shareholders the respectable dividend of thirty-four per cent. per annum. It was started some five years ago, and was in a sense the precursor of a great wave of native speculation. The fortunate Concessionary was a Dane named M. de Richelieu, who has been for many years in the more or less confidential service of the King of Siam. The tramway was so great a success pecuniarily that it served as an admirable object-lesson in the elementary principles of the investment of money to this simple people, who had previously hoarded their moneys in bags, or invested it in nothing better than slaves for the household or buffaloes for the farm. This gave the first start to an eagerness amongst all the natives to put their money to reproductive uses, which fact explains, amongst other things, the uprising of the rows upon rows of fairly good and neat-looking brick houses that line the main roads of Bangkok, almost from end to end.

The Legations and all the principal residences of Bangkok have their landings on the river front, while the more fortunate ones possess in addition a good entrance on the main road. This is also true of the Grand Palace, of which the Royal Landing is one of the most conspicuous and peculiar features on the river, fronted as it is with meagre battlements and mangy guard-houses and enormous refuse-heaps, but backed by the beautiful spires and glittering pinnacles I have already described. Directly opposite the Palace landing, on the west side of the river, is the Naval Arsenal, the one decently-kept and good-looking government department of Siam—the outcome also of the efforts of the Danish Commodore de Richelieu. Here are the headquarters of a large department of marines, which may be said to monopolise all that can be credited to the account of discipline and order in the government departments of Siam.



A LOVE-SCENE ON THE SIAMESE STAGE

As an arsenal, its equipment can hardly be called excessive; to us it might even seem a trifle inadequate, since its chief "properties" (no other word is so suitable) are a few turning-lathes, a blacksmith's shop, some Chinese boiler-makers and fitters, some native carpenters, with a few half-paid coolies and ragged prisoners in chains. I must not omit to mention the cartridge-making machinery without materials, the gun-fittings without guns, and the cannons without projectiles. The arsenal does indeed possess one large European-built dry-dock, made two or three years ago, which, after remaining for years unfinished, so long as it had been required only for ordinary government purposes, was at last completed hurriedly so soon as it became "necessary" (in the Palace sense) for the special purpose of accommodating the King's own new yacht. This latter is a vessel of two thousand five hundred tons, with velvet couches, cushioned anterooms, and innumerable ladies' bedrooms, combined with a steel deck, a ram, and an armament of quick-firing guns. The latter might have produced some telling effects upon the French gunboats last year if only there had been one single Siamese engineer who knew how to work the engines to bring the vessel into action, or a single gunner who understood how to fire her guns when she got there. These, however, were details which had unfortunately been overlooked when the Siamese Government with farcical dignity sent their curt intimation to the French Legation that "all necessary instructions" "have been given to our naval and military authorities" to prevent the French entrance.

I must make it clear, however, that Bangkok is not Siam. To see Bangkok superficially in tourist fashion without ever penetrating beneath the thin veneer of recently-acquired western tricks and manners is, of course, misleading to an indescribable degree, while even a close and intimate acquaintance with Bangkok and its life and people, will give but a deceptive and inaccurate conception of what Siam really is, either actually or potentially.

Bangkok is a town with about the population of Newcastle, and the size of Oxford, but Siam is a country with the population of Switzerland and the size of Great Britain and Ireland, Holland, Belgium, and Italy, all rolled into one. Neither a traveller nor a politician can hope to take the measure of a country like this by observing, however carefully, a hybrid development that has arisen in one small corner of it under the special circumstances of European contact and proximity to the sea; more especially when it is remembered that the distant portions of the kingdom are very slightly under the control of the central Government, so far as direct action is concerned, in spite of the recent strenuous efforts towards centralisation.

The solution of the most pressing problems of Siam's future is, of course, means of communication. So long as this one and only remedy is untouched by any efforts except the present perfunctory and fictitious designs of the Royal Railway Department, so long the vast possibilities of Siamese development must remain unrealised. Take about half an hour's walk from the Grand Palace in Bangkok in any direction you please, and you find you can go no further. Not, however, because the roads are atrocious, as in Korea, or impassable, as in China. They simply do not exist—there are none. Even the great waterway, the one hope and stay of the struggling timber-dealers and despairing rice-traders, is allowed to remain in a more or less unnavigable condition for half of every year. The trade of Siam, the development of Siam, the resources of Siam, have become what they are in the teeth of almost insuperable obstacles. In this complete absence of roads, one can of course only get out of Bangkok and see anything of the country by boat-travelling either on the canals or the main river; and afterwards start from certain recognised centres, on ponies or more often on foot, with bullocks or coolies for baggage, along the rough trails and jungle paths, created simply by the persistent tramping of feet, without artificial construction of any sort, which still do duty for "Internal Communications."

The chief places that repay a journey towards the west are Khanburi and Ratburi, which have both been important districts in the past, and with better communications would again become centres for cattle-breeding, sugar cultivation, paddy-growing, and tin-making. To reach them one must take a long journey by a once magnificent canal which now runs dry at low tide, to the Tachin River, and through another to the Meklong River, both of these rivers running parallel with the Menam into the Gulf of Siam.

The great town in the north is Chiengmai (Zimme), where there is a large population of British subjects, mostly Burmans, and consequently a British Consul, whose time is well occupied with the intricate cases that constantly arise out of the confusion of Siamese forest regulations. To reach Chiengmai means a tedious journey in native boats of some sixteen to fifty days, according to the season of the year, part of it over dangerous rapids, where one may often spend a day in making fifty yards.

To the east is the important trade centre and once royal city of Khorat, the objective of the one hundred and sixty miles of railway which is still supposed to be in active process of construction by the Royal Department of Siamese State Railways. The present method of getting there is by the "Great Trail," a worn track, trampled into huge ridges by the feet of pack-bullocks, through virgin jungle and the fever-haunted forest of the "Lord of Fire"—*Phya fai*—and over a steep pass like the sides of a ruined pyramid, some three thousand feet above sea level. The journey involves toiling on foot through waist-deep seas of mud and over various unbridged streams, except during about three months in the height of the dry season, when travelling becomes still more difficult through lack of water. Yet Khorat is the centre of a vast plain of magnificent soil, reaching right away to the Mekong, and capable, if properly developed, of nearly doubling the present revenues of Siam.

Chantabun, the place that is doubtless now best known to fame, is a long distance to the south-east, and is approached by

a journey of about twelve hours across the corner of the Gulf of Siam to the entrance of the Chantabun River (at present under French occupation and guarded by French guns), where the native boats will take you in about six hours up to the town itself. Here is the great emporium for the gem mines of the rich provinces of the *Hinterland*, as also of the pepper and coffee which count amongst the finest productions of Siam, though still undeveloped. Chantabun is the outlet also of the three rich provinces, between the Menam and the Great Cambodian Lake, on which France has long been casting covetous eyes, and over which her influence is daily increasing.

Every one who has been in Singapore or Hongkong, has seen or heard of the quaint bullet-shaped *ticals* that once formed the silver currency of Siam. These coins were originally about two shillings in value, but they are now sharing the fate of the rupee and the dollar. They are round lumps of silver hammered into a flattened and irregular shape, cleft with a deep groove on one side, and stamped with a tiny "chop" to show the reign or period of issue. As it is impossible to "ring" these coins, and most difficult to distinguish good from bad, a flat coinage of the same value has been issued, with milled edge and royal medallion and heraldic device. The *tical* is divided into four *salungs*, and each *salung* into two *füangs*, flat silver coins being issued for each of these values. The copper coinage, of which a large issue was made in Birmingham some years ago, is also a very presentable currency. A *lot* (about a farthing) is half an *att*; two *atts* make one *pai*, the equivalent of a penny; and eight *atts* go to the *füang*, the smallest silver coin.

As the *tical* is the largest coin in circulation, the interchange of money is of course a very cumbrous operation. The unfortunate European employee who goes to draw his monthly salary is compelled to take a coolie with him, or if his salary be several months in arrear, he will require several coolies and an immense stock of patience, to count and "shroff" and carry away the heavy bags of depreciated silver. Large sums are

measured in "catties," the "catty" being eighty *ticals*, a weight not represented by any current coin. During the last five years, however, all business matters have been immensely facilitated by the permission granted to the local branch of the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank to issue bank-notes for sums varying from five to a thousand *ticals*. These notes are printed in English, Siamese, and Chinese; and though it took some time for the suspicious Siamese to reverse his whole experience and to be persuaded that a "promise to pay" was worth anything at all, yet now the circulation of notes is rapidly increasing. The presence of the bank has had a very beneficial influence, too, in numerous other ways, as a convincing object-lesson of business principles and commercial integrity to a people and a government whose keenest delight is to shirk payments, who are absolutely destitute of shame in money matters, and whose promises are literally made to be broken.

It was indeed a fortunate day for business men and for the whole people of Siam when it was finally decided to put away on the shelf, unused and unissued, the hundreds of thousands of new legal tender "Treasury Notes of the Royal Siamese Treasury," which an ambitious Finance Minister had commissioned a German firm to print for him, under the familiar temptation of thus creating out of nothing an unlimited supply of ready money. The dismay that had spread amongst the officials, both native and European, throughout the country at the idea of being paid in Siamese paper promises, was an eloquent proof of the character of the national good faith.

It is a common saying in Siam that you cannot throw a stone in the street without hitting a prince or a nobleman; and the supply certainly seems prodigious and inexhaustible. The ordinary European conception of the real value of these ranks is very mistaken, chiefly owing to the preposterous English equivalents that have been invented (by an Englishman, I fear) for the native titles. It is at once apparent that in a polygamous country the family of each king must become almost

innumerable in two generations; and while the blundering *fyang* will give to each and all the same title of "Prince" and "Highness," native custom has worked out a sensible arrangement which misleads nobody, and marks off with the nicest gradations the actual percentage of purple blood. The king's sons are called *Pra Chow Luḥ Yah Tōh*. If their mother be royal or specially favoured, *Chow Fah*—"Celestial Prince"—is added. The sons of the first of these are called *Mom Chow*, and of the second, *Pra Ong Chow*. The sons of a *Mom Chow* have the title *Mom Raja-wong*, and the sons of these, that is the fourth generation from the king, only *Mom Luang*; while the fifth generation have no title at all, and are simply plain *Nai*, or "Mr.," like everybody else. An absurdly misleading idea is therefore given when European Secretaries of Legation impose the title of "Prince" or "Royal Highness" upon every one of these four generations. The Siamese themselves have the sense to attach little importance or dignity to any title below *Mom Chow*—the grandson of a king.

• European recognition of Siamese birth-titles should properly follow a very simple rule. All the Siamese who are entitled, by European law and custom, to be known as "Royal Highness," may be recognised by the distinctively royal prefix of *Somdetch*, the use of which is as inflexibly restricted by the Siamese themselves as the corresponding one among European nations. I believe the Siamese who are styled *Somdetch* now number less than twelve.

The above are all birth-titles. In addition to these, princes of the first rank sometimes receive special titles of honour from the King, either by favour or in recognition of services. They are *Krom Mun*, the lowest, *Krom Kun*, *Krom Luang*, and *Krom Pra*, the highest, and originally represented the headships of various departments of State.

The same mistakes in European nomenclature are even more glaring in the case of the so-called nobles. There is absolutely no hereditary nobility in Siam, and to speak of



A TYPICAL SIAMESE WOMAN.

Marquises, Counts, and Barons is a hideous absurdity, which causes the liveliest ridicule in Siam itself, and makes foreign snobbery a by-word amongst the people. Not a single family-title of nobility, in the English sense, exists in Siam. Every post in government pay has a particular name or title, from the clerk on his stool in the cash department of the spirit licenses, or the half-naked inspector who sleepily watches the road-sweepers in the streets, to the Director-General of Public Works, or the Minister of Finance and the Treasury. Whoever holds a post is known by its appellation; when a man is transferred to another post, he changes his appellation (or name, as the European mistakenly calls it). But these so-called titles transmit nothing to the next generation; it is an unbroken rule that titles do not descend from father to son. The son of the highest *Phya* in the land—whether the latter be a general of the army with a seat in the Cabinet, or a Minister Plenipotentiary to the Court of St. James—remains a plain *Nai*, like his father's retainers, until he obtains his first post in the Government service, when he takes the title *Khun* so-and-so, by which the previous holder of the post had been known till then. When by successive promotions he reaches a particular grade in the service, his "title" will change to *Pra* so-and-so, according to the special nature of his duties. His next step, after long waiting, is that of *Phya*, which is sometimes for special services, or as a particular mark of royal favour, elevated to *Chow Phya*. Beyond this he cannot go, except that he may be entered on the limited list of specially-exalted *Phyas*, who are allowed a gold spittoon, a gold teapot, a gold betel-box, and other insignia, presented to them by the King, and returnable on their decease.

The mistaken ideas that have arisen in European minds out of the above simple and practical arrangement are probably due to the fact that all these "titles," or rather "names of offices," are not expressed in the ordinary Siamese language, which would have dispelled the illusion by showing the intrinsic

meaning of the names, but are invariably in Pali, the sacred or classical language of the Buddhist Scriptures, in which all official names and royal attributes are expressed. This custom gives occasion for many curious and interesting observations, for one has to learn a complete vocabulary of Pali nomenclature in order to speak about royalties at all: the very eyelashes and toe-nails of a prince or king, as well as his coat or his boots, his dinner or his bath-room, having wholly different names from those of ordinary mortals. Not that these terms are used by royalties of themselves, but by every one speaking to them or of them. A volume would not suffice, I am assured, to explain the wondrous intricacies of varying pronouns and involved circumlocutions that are minutely attached to every distinct relation of rank and dignity between two speakers. For example, there are at least seven different ways in which to say "I," or "me," and four or five for "you" and "thou," each and all of which may occur in turn in a single conversation, if one is talking to or concerning several persons of different ranks. With so carefully graduated and minutely understood a system of official ceremonial, it is at once apparent how colossal a blunder is made by speaking of Siamese visitors to our shores as "Marquis" this, "Count" that, or "Baron" the other. The height of this farce, however, is only seen when one recognises in a crouching figure, trembling on all-fours upon the floor of a Siamese office, a half-naked *Luang*, who had blossomed under snobbery in London into "The Baron"; or perceives under the battered police helmet of a seedy *Phya* the features of a man to whom one has been gravely introduced in Europe as "His Excellency the Marquis."

The scheme of transmutation under which Siamese rank masquerades in English, is that *Phya* represents "Marquis," *Pra* "Count," and *Luang* "Baron." One cannot possibly discuss this seriously; indeed, among the Siamese themselves, their English rank affords a subject of ceaseless chaff and jest. The Siamese Legation in Paris could tell a very good story to the

effect that they once received a telegram advising them of the arrival of the "Marquis de" * The united Siamese staff, failing to recognise the particular member of their own aristocracy thus announced, came to the conclusion that it must be a French nobleman in charge of a Siamese Commission, and applied to the French Foreign Office for detailed information. The officials there informed them that no such title existed in France, and suggested that it must be a Siamese nobleman whose visit to Paris had already been announced. To the infinite confusion of the Siamese Legation, this hint enabled them to recognise the native face under the foreign mask. In all the above I have spoken only of one sex. With regard to the rank of Siamese ladies, it must suffice to say that "Princess" and "Countess" in Kensington, have often been their husbands' house-servants, raised to the responsibility of concubines, in Bangkok.

It is therefore nothing short of offensive to see British officials and personages of rank making themselves ludicrous in Siamese eyes by taking all these farcical titles seriously. Our Foreign Office and military authorities might at least find out who an Oriental visitor really is, before appointing aides-de-camp, ordering reviews and guards of honour, and commanding the hospitality of Governors and Viceroy's. One wonders how soon all this unreality and humbug concerning a fictitious "progress" will give way to an accurate understanding of the real condition of Siam, and thus clear the way for the true developments of which, as a country, she is undoubtedly capable.

* I omit the name because the bearer of it, who is well known to me, is a charming and enlightened man, hating the folly of which he is the victim.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE PRINCIPLES AND PERSONALITIES OF SIAMESE GOVERNMENT.

IT is difficult to convey to foreign readers any adequate notion of the degree in which the King of Siam is the head of the State. "L'état, c'est moi," is absolutely and literally true in his case. His personal will is at once the measure of the possible and the inevitable. When he has said *Dai* ("Be it so!"), finality is reached. To every Siamese the King is not alone the ruler of the land, but the actual possessor of it—of its soil, of its people, of its revenues. When the foreign missionary desires to convey to the Siamese mind the idea of God, he is compelled to employ the words *Pra Chow*, which are already used for "king." Omniscience, omnipotence, and absolute rightness are the inherent attributes of the King. To illustrate this, here is a perfectly true story. A Siamese prince received from London a packet of Christmas cards, one of which bore the text, "Glory to God in the Highest!" Without in the least understanding the meaning and sacredness of these words to Christian ears, and without the remotest intention of irreverence, he erased the word "God," and substituted the word "King," and sent it to the Palace. He had simply been struck with the peculiar appositeness of the expression, and the card gave the liveliest satisfaction in royal circles. No distinction, again, exists in the Siamese language between the personal possessions of the King and what

we should consider the property of the State. His Majesty's walking-stick and the policeman's baton are alike *Kong Luayg*—"royal property." Where money is concerned, the peculiar convenience of this absence of distinction will be sufficiently obvious. It is only within a very short time that an attempt has been made to ear-mark any of the public revenues for national purposes. I dwell upon this point because it is necessary to understand the spirit which thus underlies the whole of Siamese administration in order to realise the precarious tenure and fictitious nature of the newly-advertised machinery of reform.

Personally, Prabat Somdetch Pra Paramindr Maha Chulalongkorn Patindr Tepa Maha Mongkut Pra Chula Chom Klao Chow Yu Hua is a monarch for whom, up to a short time ago, it was possible to entertain a considerable measure of respect. To begin with, he is the best-looking man I saw in Siam. He bears himself with genuine kingly dignity, and combines with great charm of manner the peculiarly royal gift of calling forth the personal devotion of every man, Siamese or foreign, whom he chooses to admit to his intimacy. He remembers who everybody is, what their interests at the moment may happen to be, and the right phrase of personal inquiry rises instinctively to his lips. Two or three days after I had had the honour of being received by him he noticed me among a crowd of officials, and mentioning by name the house and street where I was living, asked if I was finding the surroundings agreeable. More than all this, however, the King is a student, not only of the affairs of his own country, but also of the politics and literature of Great Britain, and to a smaller extent, of Europe as well. He reads English with ease, and spoke it at least as well as the Tsarevich during all their conversations, which were carried on in that language. Most visitors take away a false idea upon this point, as it is not etiquette for him to speak anything but Siamese, except as a special mark of intimacy. All the more prominent of the princes also speak and write English with a fair amount of fluency.

During the acuter stages, for example, of the recent trouble, when it was desired to keep the discussions in the Cabinet secret from some of its members, the conversation was carried on in English by the others without any difficulty. To Dr. Gowan, his late body-physician and peculiarly intimate friend, the King owes much of his English education and insight into the foreign point of view. He has read and can show his appreciation of the chief works of the English novelists, and every day for a long time he used to translate a piece of the "Arabian Nights" to his children, before the latter were able to read it for themselves. Unfortunately, to be quite frank, his Majesty unites with the Stuart charm, the Stuart moral weakness, and he has more than once sacrificed, or permitted to be sacrificed, to the wearying intrigues of his immediate household and relatives, those to whose personal devotion he well knew himself to be under the deepest obligations. The first sign of this, which has never been forgotten in Siam, was given when he consented to the beheading of Pra Pichah, his closest friend and most loyal supporter, under pressure from the Regent, on a charge which was well known to have been invented only for the purpose of gratifying personal animosity. Dr. Gowan's dismissal was due to like causes, and has been attended by disastrous results. A third victim was Prince Narah, to whose efforts are due the few restrictions now put upon the different Ministers in their disposal of the public funds, but who succumbed to their united defence of the old profitable system of misappropriation. The latest example of this trait was afforded when the King tamely assented to the dismissal of Mr. Morant, the governor of the Crown Prince and tutor to the royal children, who had lived for years in a position of greater confidence and responsibility with the royal family than any foreigner has ever done.

The King's interest in foreign matters was first aroused, and his eyes first opened, by his visit to Lord Mayo in India in 1872. From the Viceroy he learned a lesson in the principles of enlightened government which he has never forgotten, and



AT KOH-SI-CHANG : THE KING OF SIAM AND THE SECOND QUEEN.

the assassination of Lord Mayo, whilst the King was still in India, left an indelible impression upon him. Subsequently on several occasions he has visited the Straits Settlements, the protected Malay States, and the semi-independent States—which became humbly Siamese for the duration of his stay—studying the differences between Siamese and British administration and making open comparisons, greatly to the disadvantage of the former. Unfortunately, however, as I shall have to explain later, the King is no longer what he was.

The office known among foreigners as “Second King”—a title in no way suggested by the real Siamese title of *Wang Nar*—was abolished on the death of the last holder, Prince George Washington, the palace was turned into barracks and the position of the family obliterated. Consequently, the second person in rank in the country—above the Queen herself—is the Crown Prince, Somdetch Pra Borom Orosa Tiraj Chow Fah Maha Vajirunhis, whose position and title were created by a special royal proclamation in January, 1887, when the boy was already nine years old. He is not the first-born son of the King, for there are four older sons and several older daughters by concubines. Two of the latter were born to the King before he had reached the age of fifteen, the mother of the first being his ex-nurse. The Crown Prince holds his position as the eldest son of the First Queen. Both this lady and her sister, the Second Queen, are the half-sisters of his Majesty. It is only fair to the Siamese to say that this arrangement is not a royal or immemorial custom, and it by no means finds favour in their eyes. Up to the age of thirteen—he is now sixteen—the Crown Prince lived the usual spoilt life of an Oriental child in the women’s quarters of the Palace. After spending the customary period of a few months in the Buddhist noviciate, and becoming, in Siamese parlance, of “adult age,” he was compelled to live “outside.” Here he would certainly have fallen a prey to the usual emasculating influences of an eastern court, which it was at once the interest and the design of his numerous uncles to place,

in his way, but fortunately his royal father determined to save the boy from a repetition of the baneful experiences of his own early youth, and therefore acceded to the earnest pleading of his tutor, Mr. Morant, in favour of a strict and independent intellectual and moral education. Having once agreed to this course, the King was wise enough to see that it could only be carried out by giving absolute authority to Mr. Morant, and this he did at a special public audience. Placing in Mr. Morant's hands a small gold salver as a pledge of his confidence and support, he charged him to "control my son's actions, influence his character, and mould his will; guard and guide him and act towards him at all times as towards your own son;" while to the Crown Prince he added that he thus publicly, in the presence of his family and his Ministers, entrusted him to Mr. Morant's care. An arrangement like this will no longer sound strange when it is remembered that, owing to the King's life as described in the preceding chapter, father and son lived entirely separate lives and often did not see each other for weeks together. The regular student life which followed, safeguarded from deleterious influences that surrounded it like malaria, had lasted less than a year and a half when it was suddenly broken off by the series of events which was—and is—to work so much harm in other ways to Siam. In 1892, the King's health, which had for years required careful watching, became rapidly worse when the restraining hand of a confidential European physician was removed. Twenty-five years of harem life, combined with the excessive indulgence in drugs to which all Orientals are prone, had sown the seeds of physical and mental decay. His lassitude led him to absent himself from affairs for a long period, and to plunge into the pursuit of pleasure in the luxurious sea-side Palace which he built for himself at enormous expense. Thus the recently-formed "Cabinet" was left to administer the affairs of the country, without either the presence or the control of their natural head. Suddenly, like the explosion of a mine, came the crisis with France and the terrified presentiment that the ancient prophecy

was about to be fulfilled, which declared that "the kingdom of Siam will be lost when the King goes to live at the sea." He returned from his palace of indolence at Koh-si-chang literally at a moment's notice, determined to retrieve his position and the future of his country. But it was too late. His vigour was lost, his opportunity was gone. The French net was around him, the French gunboats came up the Menam, the ultimatum was presented, and after hopeless procrastination accepted. This shattering of his ambitions—and in his Jubilee year, too—reduced him to a state of mental helplessness, and he retired "inside" to his apartments, almost literally to his bed. For weeks together he never left his room, and the fact that he was still alive was not certainly known except to the five or six ladies who alone saw his face. In the collapse which thus ensued, the education of the Crown Prince was among the first things to fall, and his English guardian, left a helpless victim to the relentless and now dominant jealousies of court circles, was promptly dismissed.

The young prince, thus in a moment deprived of all control, has for the past year been allowed to fall back into a life of lethargy and self-indulgence. But for this, the country had good reason to hope well of its future ruler. He is an exceptionally clever boy, and had made astonishing progress in his English education. He spent his whole time reading English books. His favourite lesson was a study of the weekly edition of the *Times*, and it is not too much to say that his acquaintance with the figures and broad outlines of European politics is far greater than that of any boy of his age in this country. An Oriental at sixteen, however, is virtually of the same age as a European at six-and-twenty, so that this is not so surprising as it sounds. India was a pet subject with him, as it has been with his father, and no conversation was too long for him if it dealt with the development of the Independent States or the springs of Indian nationalities. While lacking the special charm of his father's manner, Prince Maha Vajirunhis luckily .

possesses a character of singular determination, and this is the one thing that will enable him to withstand the intrigues of his twenty-four uncles and innumerable brothers, in the unlikely event of another monarch being required for an independent Siam. The moral weakness of the father, however, takes the form of physical lethargy in the son. This was yielding to Mr. Morant's energetic treatment in the shape of drilling, riding and driving; but since "breed is stronger than pasture," his present surroundings, if continued, will soon destroy any further hope in this direction.

While absolute power in Siam is thus vested in the King, faintly reflected again in the Crown Prince, the administrative and executive functions are delegated to the various brothers and half-brothers of the King, and other officials. Until quite recently, each department or section of government was in the hands of some one prince or noble, who was individually responsible to his Majesty alone for his actions and the state of his department. He obtained what money he could from the King from year to year, and did what he chose with it, except for the King's occasional criticisms and rebukes, without the embarrassing details of anything in the nature of accounts. But in 1891 a great reorganisation took place, and a general combination and centralisation, both of responsibility and control, was attempted. A Cabinet was formed, consisting of twelve portfolios, of which the holders are nominated by the King and removable at his pleasure. Each Minister has to submit his estimate for the coming year to the united Cabinet, who cut it about as they please by a majority vote, subject only to his Majesty's final approval. And each must further furnish to the Treasury month by month an account of all actual expenditure in minutest detail, before he receives the funds to meet it. This sounds absurd, but it is the Siamese system. The money must be spent before it is paid over, and thus every department is always a month in arrear in theory, and a good deal more in practice. A dozen match-boxes, for example, will figure on



THE FIRST QUEEN, SIAM.

the War Office accounts at so much per box, and if this detail should be omitted the whole account would be sent back by the Treasury to be amended, with the result—not altogether undesired—of delaying a settlement for a week. The evil consists obviously in the fact that in Siam the Treasury is at the same time the Exchequer and Audit Department.

The twelve portfolios which constitute the Cabinet, and the present holders of them, are as follow:—

- I. Minister of Foreign Affairs. Krom Luang Devawongse Varoprakar.
- II. Minister of Finance. Chow Fah Krom Kun Naris. Under this are also included the Customs and the "farms"—the imposts on spirits, gambling, birds' nests, &c.
- III. Minister of War. Somdetch Chow Fah Krom Pra Bhanupandhwongse Varadej, the King's younger full-brother, who controls both Army and Navy.
- IV. Minister of Justice. Pra Ong Chow Svasti Sobhon.
- V. Minister of the North. Krom Mun Damrong Rajanuparab. Under this are all the provincial administrations north of Bangkok, except a few which still remain under the old *régime*.
- VI. Minister of the South and West (Kralahome). Phya Montri Suriawongse. Under this office is the rest of the Interior and the military and civil *corvée*.
- VII. Minister of the Royal Household. Krom Mun Prachaks.
- VIII. Minister of Public Works. Krom Mun Sanprasidt. Under this are the railways, the Post and Telegraph Departments, and all public buildings.
- IX. Minister of Local Government. Krom Mun Narès Varariddhi. Under this are the control of prisons, police, and police-courts in Bangkok, and some of the duties of a Home Secretary.
- X. Minister of Agriculture. Phya Surisak. Under this

are land revenues, mining and other concessions, forests, and surveys.

XI. Minister of Public Instruction. Phya Bhaskarawongse.
Under this are educational institutions, hospitals, and ecclesiastical affairs.

XII. Privy Seal. Krom Mun Bidhyalabh.

The deliberations of this Cabinet are supposed to be secret. Their control, in combination, over the affairs of the country is stringent and complete, excepting always for the unrestricted will of the King.

Until the recent collapse they met usually at eight o'clock in the evening, for all-night sittings, his Majesty often attending, and occasionally the Crown Prince. Each member of the Cabinet is absolute in authority over all the officials of his department, and as these are usually chosen from his own personal retainers who have grown up with him from his boyhood, and also from the members of his own and his wife's families, a change of the head of a department generally involves the change of nearly all the staff, irrespective of the fitness of the new-comers and based only on their personal adherence. The incredible folly of this system may be realised when I say that the draughtsman in the Public Works Department may thus be suddenly called upon to dispense medicine at a hospital, the clerk in the Treasury to act as adjutant to a cavalry regiment, or the tide-waiter in the Customs to become a departmental inspector of schools. To this inherent absurdity must also be added a functional one. Since the Cabinet Ministers, when they were fulfilling their normal duties, sat up all night for five nights a week, of course they slept all day, and strolled into their offices any time about sunset. The effect of this upon the ordinary work of the government may be imagined when it is added that without the Minister's special and personal sanction on each occasion nothing whatever can be done, not even a highway be repaired to make it passable, an urgent question answered, or an *att* of money spent.

Besides this central authority, there are also a number of Royal Commissioners for the Provinces, a new creation, nominated by the King for a certain period, with absolute powers. Their salary was supposed to be fixed at a sufficiently high figure to place them beyond the temptation of obtaining money by the usual methods of Oriental officials. They were appointed to draw the reins of the central government tighter over some of the larger provinces and the many semi-independent peoples that nominally recognise Siamese suzerainty. There is one at Chiengmai, whose jurisdiction extends over all the northern part of Siam, even the so-called "King of Chiengmai" and the other great hereditary princes of the Laos provinces being forcibly subordinated to him. There were others at Luang Prabang and Nong Kai, administering enormous districts which included the territory recently annexed by France. Others are at Khorat, and Oobon; the jurisdiction of the latter being likely to clash with that of the French along the new river frontier and especially on the islands in the river which were the scenes of the first hostilities. The next important Commissioner is over the Pachin province, a particularly able man; and through its proximity to the great Patriew river, his district is one of the wealthiest rice and cattle-producing centres in Siam. Moreover, in the ancient fort—which, by the way, Pra Pičhah built, and where he was beheaded—he is forming the nucleus of the only disciplined and promising force that Siam has any prospect of possessing.

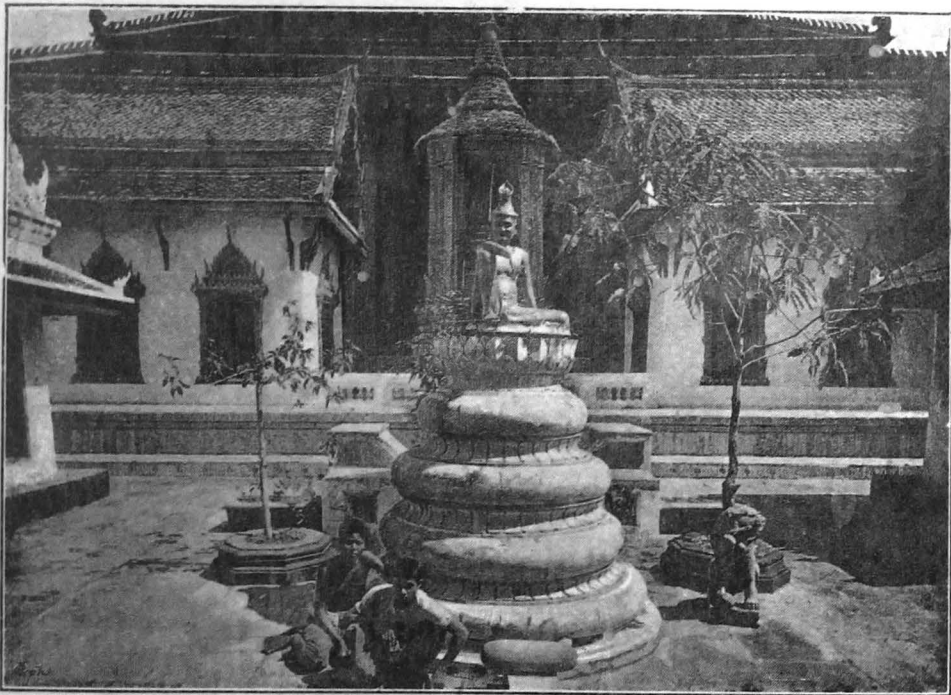
One of the results of the King's tour round the Malay Peninsula was his endeavour to strengthen his hold over the northern States there, which were very meagrely represented by their contributions to the royal treasury, in spite of their great potential wealth. Over these, therefore, the King appointed a Royal Commissioner with plenary powers, to the infinite disgust and thinly-veiled opposition of the native Sultans. All these Royal Commissioners are supposed to over-

ride the local governors and other provincial officials. One of the special reasons for their creation was the better financial control of the more distant provinces of the kingdom, and to this end, while they possess powers to appropriate certain portions of local taxes, for local requirements, they are responsible for forwarding all the rest of the provincial exactions to Bangkok. An important feature of the new arrangement is that the Royal Commissioners exercise a military control in the provinces. There had previously been no military power whatever in the hands of the local authorities, any requirements of this kind being met by temporary expeditions sent up from time to time from Bangkok, as circumstances demanded. As things are now, a Commissioner has at his command on the spot a considerable armed force, which he is always liable to employ on his own initiative. This fact explains how it was in the power of fire-eating Commissioners to enter upon hostilities with the French on the frontier, and on the other hand, how the central authorities in Bangkok could so plausibly disown any such act when it suited their purpose to do so. This scheme of centralisation is much the most important—I might almost say the only effective—political development of modern Siam. So far as I know, it has not been described before, and its importance and significance are not yet appreciated in Siam; indeed, the new functions underlying the old title of *Kar Luang* are much more keenly felt than clearly understood.

These Royal Commissioners are almost invariably half-brothers of the King. This leads me to speak of the personalities of Siamese politics, first, in the case of those who are responsible for the present state of things, and second, of those from whom may be hoped, under improved conditions, any good work in the future. First of all, and chief in the former category, comes Prince Devawongse Varoprakar, Minister of Foreign Affairs, without doubt the cleverest and most far-sighted man in Siam. For many years he possessed unrivalled influence and power, alike through the King's confidence, his own brains, and the fact



THE CROWN PRINCE OF SIAM AND SOME OF HIS BROTHERS..



A ROYAL COURT-YARD, BANGKOK.

of his being full-brother to both the First and Second Queens. The *Krom Luang*, as his Siamese title runs, is a short man with a bright round face, of scrupulously polite manners, who conceals a mass of information and a very sharp mind under an exterior of simple good-humour and apparent frankness. His friends and enemies concur in describing him as an extremely clever man. He speaks and writes English with ease, although he has only spent six months in Europe, of which three weeks were passed in London. I do not think he is troubled with more faith than other diplomatists in people's motives, and *ab hoste doceri* is his motto in treating with the representatives of Europe. In his office he sits surrounded with a rampart of books on international law and modern diplomatic history, and the grafting of European punctilio and traditional precision upon Oriental *fai*r and patience, make a combination difficult to beat. The Siamese Minister for Foreign Affairs has had a difficult part to play, but until recently the *Krom Luang* may easily claim to have held his own, single-handed, against many more powerful and more experienced comers. For some twenty years he enjoyed the perfect confidence and intimacy of "the King, my master," as he expressed it, but his position has now lost its former brilliancy. Through certain domestic events which have remained more or less a mystery to the outside world, Prince Devawongse experienced a fall. In Siam the loss of royal favour and the withdrawal of royal confidence is like leprosy: the victim is shunned, his power vanishes, and his former friends combine to keep him at a distance. Since there is nobody to take his place—there is literally nobody, except perhaps Prince Damrong, who could attempt to conduct a Foreign Office correspondence—Prince Devawongse still formally directs the affairs of his department, and preserves the necessary outward appearances in intercourse with the foreign representatives. But to initiate a policy, to direct a negotiation, or restrain his brother Ministers, Prince Devawongse no longer has the power. The very serious evil of the situation is that any foreign representative who may

desire to make a communication, present a demand, or suggest a policy to the Siamese Government, is still officially compelled to go to Prince Devawongse, though the latter is now entirely destitute of the power to carry anything into effect. Under these circumstances—and this is a point upon which I wish to lay great emphasis—a clear understanding between Siam and any foreign government is impossible. Few men who have had personal relations with Prince Devawongse, and whose affairs have been at the mercy of his good faith, will pity him in his fall. The British Foreign Office, at any rate, which has had one direct example and countless indirect examples of his diplomatic methods, will shed no tears over the grave of his reputation.

The next most potent personality in Siamese politics is Prince Svasti Sobhon, brother of Prince Devawongse, nominally Minister of Justice, but at this moment Plenipotentiary in Europe to negotiate with Great Britain and France. He spent some years with a tutor in Oxford, and was for a short time a member of Balliol College, where he was one of the many pets of the late Master, and he will be remembered by Oxford society of about nine years ago, as a very pleasant and intelligent young Siamese, professing advanced Radical and democratic notions. These he carried to such an extent as to deprecate any employment of his title, preferring to be styled plain "Mr." He gained several distinctions in lawn-tennis competitions, but his studies were not carried far enough to afford any standard of comparison. English, however, he acquired fluently. In due course he returned to Siam, and vital changes were expected to follow from his reforming influence. But the sweets of power and the enervating atmosphere of Siamese officialdom soon eradicated any high aims he might once have possessed. A Siamese in Europe and a Siamese in Siam are two different personalities, and an unpleasant incident which occurred soon after Prince Svasti's return, showed the change of his feeling towards Europeans. He has now become one of the most bitter opponents of European influence in Siam. After an unsuccessful

tenure of several posts on the Local Government Board, he retired for some time, as required by custom, into the priesthood. On emerging from this he was placed at the head of the new Department of Justice, of which I shall have something to say in the next chapter. As the troubles with France along the eastern frontier gradually developed, Prince Svasti was one of the strongest advocates of resistance, and it is probably true that he was more responsible than any other Siamese for the policy which found expression in the ridiculous and unjustifiable attack upon the French gunboats, and the consequent presentation of the French ultimatum. His recent conduct of affairs, however, while he has been in Europe as special Envoy, has been marked by much more discretion and seriousness.

It is a pleasure to turn to the personality of Prince Damrong. One of the first surprises of my original visit to Siam was in finding a prince who had then never been outside his own country, and who yet spoke English with ease and accuracy, was a regular reader of the English newspapers, conversant with European politics and literature, and anxious to enter instantly into a discussion with me upon the details of the complicated situation in home politics at that time. At the age of twenty-one he was a mere subaltern in the King's bodyguard. The Education Department, which he afterwards founded, grew out of the King's approval of a small class he had formed for the instruction of his own men. He is one of the very few Siamese who have any sense of either punctuality or neatness. When Minister of Public Instruction he made a daily inspection in person of all the hospitals under him, visited one of his schools every afternoon, and was always to be found in his office from eleven to four. I can hardly attempt to explain how remarkable this is in Siam. I first learned to respect Prince Damrong from a trifling personal incident. In Siam every request of an accredited foreigner is instantly granted—in words. The promise bears no relation whatever to the performance, but nothing is ever frankly refused. When I was exploring the ruins of Ayuthia, the

ancient capital of Siam, which was destroyed by the victorious Burmese in 1767, I discovered the broken-off and battered head of a Buddha lying buried among the almost impassable growth of tropical weeds. It had been there for half a century, and would, of course, remain untouched for ever. I marked the place, and inquired on my return under whose control this would be. On learning that Prince Damrong had charge of all matters of this kind, I asked his permission to send back for the head and take it away with me. He replied that he would consider the matter, and afterwards wrote me a very courteous letter, saying that although the head was broken and neglected, and nobody would ever pay any attention to it, nevertheless it was the head of Buddha, and therefore he did not think it would be decorous for a foreigner to take it away as a curiosity. The more I learned about Siam, the more I liked Prince Damrong for this refusal. His insight into the needs of his country is shown by his latest scheme for internal reform, namely, the proposal to bring under one responsible head in Bangkok the many clashing provincial authorities. That this is being bitterly opposed by all his rival Ministers is perhaps the best proof of its desirability; and though the King's weakness prevents him from settling this crucial question by saying "*Dai*," or "*Mai dai*," sooner or later its adoption must come.

Two conspicuous and yet curiously ineffective figures in Siamese affairs are the only two own brothers of the King, known respectively to foreigners as "the *Ong Yai*" and "the *Ong Noi*." By the ancient custom of Siam the elder of these would be the next King, as exemplified in the previous reign. The elevation of the Crown Prince to the position of heir apparent having naturally attached much suspicion to the alternative heir, the *Ong Yai* has chosen the wiser part of withdrawing himself entirely from affairs. There are two absurd rumours in connection with this prince: first, that he is mentally affected, and second, that he is cherishing hopes of securing the succession to the throne. A few minutes of his pleasant and

H.R.H. Prince Bhanurangse.

Prince Devawongse.

Prince Narah.

Prince Nares.



AN AFTER-DINNER GROUP, BANGKOK.

(A flash-light photograph.)

intelligent conversation is sufficient to dispose of the first, and the second is based upon a complete misunderstanding of the present trend of Siamese affairs. The younger brother, Prince Bhanurangse, Commander-in-Chief and Minister of War, "the *Ong Noi*," or "Young Prince," called "the *Krom Pra*" by Siamese, possesses the personal charm of his brother the King, with much greater gaiety of manner. He is a past master in the art of organising pageants and processions, a gift greatly appreciated by the pleasure-loving Siamese. Of his geniality and hospitality I can speak from personal experience. His palace is a fine building, as an Italian architect was given *carte blanche* in its construction, and when it is necessary to entertain any foreign visitor of high rank, "the *Ong Noi*" always gladly undertakes the task. His influence upon Siamese politics, however, has not been great, though his sympathies have consistently been on the side of the best foreign influences.

Another personality of the same type is Prince Naris, the present Minister of Finance. He is a musician, a poet, and an artist, and by his work in each of these fields he has recalled the time when Siam possessed a genuine art-inspiration of her own, before this became hopelessly unfashionable in the face of discordant European trumpets and gaudy chromo-lithographs. There are two other men specially worthy of mention in the small group from whom intelligent and patriotic efforts might be expected in a reinvigorated Siam. The one is Prince Narès, for some years Minister in London, and now practically governor of Bangkok. Any one who has had an opportunity of seeing the prisons as they were and as they are, will need no other assurance of Prince Narès' qualities. In his instincts and point of view he resembles the type of mind of the English gentleman more closely than does any other Siamese. He is one of the few princes who really understand and sympathise with the common people. Although he has had more than the usual opportunities of enriching himself he remains a poor man. Except the King he was the first

Siamese to secure a European tutor for his sons, one of whom is about to take his degree at Trinity College, Cambridge, while another is high up at Harrow. The second is Prince Bichidt, the eldest of the King's half-brothers. After acquiring a unique knowledge of law, both Siamese and European, and a large experience in the higher courts of Bangkok, he was—in Siamese fashion—deliberately shut out from the Ministry of Justice, a post for which he was ideally fitted, and made Royal Commissioner of one of the far Eastern provinces. He took advantage of his exile to add a working knowledge of French to his knowledge of English, and created the first decent provincial organisation that had ever been seen in Siam. His special talents made him the only possible man to occupy the very difficult post of Presiding Judge at the recent State Trial of Pra Yot. Throughout the prolonged proceedings his conduct was such as to win him the highest praise from all the Europeans who were present. Like most Siamese, Prince Bichidt has a hobby, in his case medicine, his knowledge of this being remarkable, even judged by European standards.*

I have dwelt on these personal matters at such length because I have wished to show that while there are some of the Siamese princes—and these, as a rule, the most conspicuous—from whom no disinterested or stimulating efforts can ever be expected, there are still a number of others, several of whom I have not had space to mention, who under foreign stimulus and direction could be relied upon to take their places and do their duty in that reformed and prosperous Siam which I, for one, so earnestly desire to see, and whose “integrity and independence” Great Britain, in the words of Lord Rosebery,† is “resolved to respect and maintain.”

* It is said that at last, after having been kept nine months in Bangkok doing nothing, Prince Bichidt has been appointed Minister of Justice; probably to avoid sending him back to Oolon, where he might have refused to lend himself to Prince Devanwongse's present tortuous policy on French frontier questions.

† “Correspondence respecting the Affairs of Siam,” No. 1, 1894, p. 151.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

FICTIONS AND FACTS OF SIAMESE AFFAIRS.

I HAVE shown what, in theory, is the government of the Kingdom of Siam. It remains to winnow the fact from the fiction. In the first place, to put it bluntly, the Cabinet itself now exists only on paper. For over twelve months, I believe, it has not once met, and has ceased to be a factor of government. How this has come about I will now try to explain. When the King was suddenly roused from his dream of ease in March, 1893, as already described, by the imminence of a national crisis, and returned to Bangkok to take up the reins, he found the Cabinet had made such good use of its novel freedom from control that he was unable, in his enfeebled state, to re-establish his personal supremacy. From 1892 to 1893 the Cabinet had held a nine months' carnival of intrigues and jealousies, followed by a three months' nightmare of cabals and recriminations. Thus when the country most needed a cool firm hand at the helm, it was at the mercy of a group of hot-headed and ignorant young despots, characterised alternately by bravado and terror, by resolution and vacillation. That the settlement of the Convention with France, such as it is, was ever reached at all, is due to the fact that the matter was at last taken out of the hands of the Cabinet and left for Prince Devawongse to conclude alone, thanks to the departure from Siam of Prince Svasti, who had been the chief obstructionist throughout. From that date, August 20, 1893, until November,

1894, there has not been, I believe, a single meeting of the Cabinet for governmental and administrative purposes. The entire machinery of government has come to a standstill. The estimates for 1894 have not been made up, much less sanctioned; no budget decided upon, no funds decreed. Only the most urgent expenses are being met somehow or other, casually, and by borrowed money.

This complete breakdown of government by Cabinet is due to the fact that the Cabinet was composed of an arbitrary selection of the King's half-brothers, together with a few nobles of no influence and importance. This band of brothers reflected perfectly the virulent jealousies of the various mothers that bore them: "to hate like a brother," is a Siamese saying. The meetings of the Cabinet furnished an ideal field for the exercise of these jealousies; a succession of changing personal combinations for the purpose of smashing each fresh influence as it threatened to preponderate, forms the history of their deliberations. The cooperation of all for the common good is unknown, and indeed inconceivable to any one who understands the temperament of this polygamous brotherhood. When the French gunboats were actually in the river, a bombardment threatening, and Siam tottering to her fall, the meetings of the Cabinet were like the wrangles in a pot-house, so much so that the more dignified members on several occasions declined to be a party to any further discussion. As was well known in Bangkok, not a little of this was the direct result of Prince Svasti's overbearing insistence upon strong measures against the French; his great influence, so deplorable in the interests of peace, being traceable to the fact that both the First and Second Queens are his own sisters. It is almost impossible to hope that the King's strong hand can ever be laid upon the Cabinet again, and now that twelve months of universal apathy have matured last year's seeds of suspicion and intrigue, the power of the Cabinet as a combined body with initiative and a policy is non-existent, and its

resuscitation is in the highest degree unlikely. Certainly nothing could accomplish this except either the King's complete recovery of health and prestige, or the emergence of some strong will from the general chaos. And as the only strong will in this jarring family is that of Prince Svasti himself, the remedy might not be much better than the disease.

It may be interesting, however, to glance for a moment at the results accomplished by the Cabinet before its breakdown. Take the administration of justice, for example. At the grand centenary of the founding of Bangkok in 1882, the foundation-stone was laid with great *éclat* of the New Royal Courts of Justice, which were announced as the inauguration of a new era of justice and judicial reform for Siam. When the buildings were finished, a grand opening ceremony to inaugurate this reform was announced to take place in 1886, but it never came to pass, and the buildings, erected at an enormous cost, with lofty towers and vast halls, were allowed to decay and moulder in emptiness for nearly six years, till the tower actually fell to pieces and had to be taken down, and the roof became so rotten that it had to be replaced with thatch, as it actually now appears, within a stone's throw of the Royal Palace gates. At last, in 1892, the various straggling courts of Bangkok—the Slave-cases Court in one corner of the city, the Land Court in another, the Criminal Courts in another, and the Appeal Court inside the Palace,—were collected into this one building and placed under the newly created Minister of Justice, who was to control the whole staff of judges, eradicate corruption, work off the thousands of pending cases, and codify the whole of the laws of Siam! As I have said, Prince Svasti was the first Minister. His strength of character soon led to various floggings of venal judges, and to a general uneasiness in all the courts; but so far as improvements in procedure or organisation of laws were concerned, it was merely King Stork instead of King Log. New stamp duties and fee exactions were imposed, proving lucrative for the department, but not a blessing to suitors; and the

administration of justice remains as complete a farce as it was when I wrote some time ago that "justice is not an unknown quantity in Siam: it does not exist. You might as well look for saccharin in salt or for silver in a pewter pot."

The so-called International Court, which is also under this Ministry, deserves a special mention. It was founded to deal with cases brought by foreigners against Siamese. Cases brought by Siamese against foreigners are heard, of course, in the Foreign Consular Courts "down town," where the native has every facility for getting justice. But when a foreigner has any claim against a Siamese, he first wastes several weeks in efforts to get his Consul to settle it through the Siamese Foreign Office; this in the case of the British Consul has nearly always been futile of late, owing to the extraordinary subservience of British officials to Siamese desires. But the real farce begins when the case at last comes before the International Court, which is the tool and servant of the same Foreign Minister who has just rejected the suit of the Consul. Here every possible device for procrastinating the trial, burking the evidence, suborning witnesses, and generally "besting" the *farang*, is resorted to with complete success, till after weeks of fruitless effort the case simply dies a natural death, and the European gives it up as a bad job. This condition of things has become, after years of license, such a great scandal that strenuous efforts are at last being made by the foreign community to improve matters, but the precedent of easy-going acquiescence so long followed at the British Legation has made it a hard task to get the evil remedied. The French officials, on the other hand, have long since refused to have cases submitted to the International Court at all, and wisely insist on the decision of disputed matters at the Foreign Office only. A volume might be written on the manners and customs of this International Court without giving any adequate idea of its unspeakable rottenness and shameless parody of justice in foreign cases. So much for fiction and fact in one branch of government.



IN THE PALACE TEMPLE, BANGKOK.

I pass now to the Department of Public Works. This, though nominally active throughout Siam, is in reality—except for the Railway and Postal Departments—confined to the city of Bangkok, and is there occupied almost solely with matters conducing to the royal convenience or profit. It received instructions, for instance, to erect a palace for the Crown Prince within a period of nine months. This was three years ago. The foundations were dug, and they are now full of water, while the marbles, iron-work, and glass-work, ordered at great expense from Italy, lie in inextricable confusion at the wharves some miles away. Another of its undertakings was to build a new wharf for the Customs. To effect this, a dam had to be built during the season of low water in the river. The work was done so badly, that when three-quarters finished it was found to be useless and had to be recommenced. The rainy season, however, came on before it could be completed, and therefore the Customs, which previously had a bad wharf, now has none at all. Again, one of the principal roads of Bangkok is interrupted by the great canal to the north. Seventeen years ago an iron bridge for this was ordered from England, and duly delivered. It still lies in sections near where it should have been thrown across, and in the absence of bridge or ferry the remaining three miles of the road are useless. In the meantime the staff of the department is occupied in building rows of houses in which members of the royal family, chiefly the ladies, are investing their private economies, and in putting into splendid order the smaller canals in the city itself, upon which the royal eye is likely to fall, while the great main canals outside, the true arteries of Siamese trade, monuments to the energy of former rulers and officials, have been allowed to silt up until they are only navigable for a few hours a day at high tide.

The most conspicuous Siamese enterprise of recent times is, of course, the scheme of railway extension. At first the professed intention was to connect Bangkok with Chiangmai, and a con-

cession to make the necessary surveys was granted to Sir Andrew Clarke, and ultimately carried out, though not without many disputes. The line itself was never seriously contemplated, and the concession for the surveys was probably only given to avoid refusing the request of a man who had once rendered great services to Siam. At any rate, nothing whatever, except the useless expenditure of a huge sum of money by Siam, ever came of the scheme. The railway, sixteen miles long, between Bangkok and Paknam, the Piræus of Siam, was built under a concession granted to Commodore de Richelieu, and is paying its way. This result was due solely to European enterprise and eagerness to make money; by the Siamese Railway Department the line was met with hindrances from the very first. The only Government railway scheme which had any prospect of being successfully carried out was the line, 160 miles long, to Khorat, whence two theoretical branches were to tap the eastern part of the kingdom at Bassac and the northern at Nong Kai. The idea was an excellent one, though it is certain that the traffic under Siamese direction would not have paid for a very long time, and that the upkeep of the line would have proved a task too tiresome for any Oriental and too costly for any private purse. There was no difficulty about raising the money, since by Royal Decree the interest on the capital was guaranteed and therefore the wealthier members of the royal family hastened to invest their money. It was commenced under the directions of the Royal Siamese State Railways Department, at the head of which was Herr Bethge, a German, formerly the agent of Herr Krupp in China, who engaged a very large staff, naturally composed for the most part of Germans, at high salaries. The contract was secured by an English firm which has done much good work in the Malay Peninsula and Ceylon, Messrs. Murray Campbell and Co., who were understood to be financed by Messrs. Jardine, Matheson and Co. In the granting of this contract there was a great deal of unpleasantness, into which it is not necessary to enter here, as the story can be found recorded

in the columns of the English newspaper published in Bangkok. Up to the present only a few kilometres of the line have been laid, and of these a great part is merely for the purpose of transporting material, and will not form part of the permanent way, while the heavy portion of the work in the hill sections is practically untouched. The contractors have brought actions against the Siamese Government for departmental obstruction and delays, which have been decided in their favour by arbitration in London, and they have received large sums in compensation. There does not appear to be the slightest probability of this line ever being completed under the present *régime*, except perhaps as far as the King's palace at Bang-pa-in.

Under the Public Works Department are also the Postal and Telegraph services. The former has been under the care of Germans, who have had a free hand and have therefore established an excellent organisation, with ramifications all over Siam. The Telegraphs, from which all European employees have been gradually eliminated, are a byword for their inefficiency. For seven years the cable destined to connect the capital with Koh-si-chang, where all ships wait for their cargoes and whence they should be signalled, has lain on its reel in shallow water at Koh-si-chang. And as for the land-lines, the British Consul-general in his Report for 1892 says: "The telegraph lines have not been maintained in an efficient state during the year, and much inconvenience and loss has been caused by frequent interruptions of the international lines *viâ* Saigon and Tavoy. The line to Chiengmai, too, has been subject to so many interruptions that it would be almost better to have no line at all. . . . It may be said in favour of the telegraph department that Siam is a peculiarly difficult country in which to keep telegraph communication open. . . . These difficulties have, however, always remained the same, whereas the efficiency of the line has been constantly deteriorating, and this deterioration has been especially rapid of late."

I must say a word about the Customs, as it is a peculiarly

gross case of Siamese maladministration, and an excellent example of the defiance of treaty engagements with foreign Powers. It is, too, a serious matter in its effect upon foreign trade, particularly that of Great Britain, which is eighty-seven per cent. of the whole. Under the late Minister of Finance, a British Inland Revenue official of great experience and ability, Mr. David Williams, was lent by the British Government to place the Customs service of Siam on a proper basis. As a result of the free hand which was at first granted to him astonishing results were achieved, both in the presentation of the accounts and in the increase of revenue obtained. One would have thought that the latter fact would have been sufficient to assure Mr. Williams any powers that he desired. But under a new Minister jealousy of the *farang* has been too strong; by means of successive vexatious interferences, the gradual curtailment of his powers, and the intrusion of incapable native subordinates, he has been reduced to the position of an adviser whose advice is not taken; the service is worse than it ever was; the revenue has fallen; the accounts produced are untrustworthy; and difficulties with the various Consuls arising out of defiance of treaty rights are of constant occurrence.*

* Some readers unfamiliar with the East may wonder how it comes about that capable Europeans do not achieve better results in spite of native opposition and lethargy. I cannot give a better answer than in the words of Mr. G. H. Grindrod, whose experiences in Siam are mentioned later in the present chapter. I published Mr. Grindrod's letter in an article in the *Contemporary Review* for November, 1893, describing it as from a writer "personally unknown to me but whose name and position command respect." The Siamese seldom speak the truth themselves, and therefore they seldom credit others with doing so, and the letter in question was by them universally attributed to a friend of mine whose relations with the King at the time would have made it improper for him to write it. I am glad to have an opportunity of saying this. Mr. Grindrod wrote:—

"Not unnaturally,* you will ask why the superior servants of such indifferent masters do not *compel* results by sheer force of character and ability. I confess myself completely unable to answer this question to the satisfaction of those who know the East only from books, nor can I picture to myself any illustration from western politics, which would adequately parallel the conditions here. Some vague conceptions of the truth may perhaps be gained from such facts as these:

* Nearly every department of the Government service is under the immediate

But it is the Education Department that has probably been most talked about and has brought most credit to Siam, owing to Prince Damrong's recent visit to England and his tour through Europe and India. I have already spoken in the preceding chapter about this enterprising and comparatively able prince. It was under his auspices that the Education Department achieved perhaps the only real and effective reforms in the country. Assisted by the advice, and still more by the energetic personal efforts of Mr. Morant, a scheme of national education was planned out, its foundations were well laid, and its various parts were developed in their proper order. The scheme was based on a system of vernacular education, for which the

control of a native head, whose education is inferior to that of a child in the lower standards of your elementary schools, and whose experience is that of a semi-barbarian bewildered by a superficial acquaintance with the delicate political and social machinery of advanced western civilisation. This curious 'Cabinet Minister' is almost inaccessible to his official subordinates, native or foreign, for he ignores all correspondence, and comes to his office generally at midnight—that being the time when his Majesty the King prefers to be awake.

"Towards the European members of his department the native head entertains a curious combination of feelings: jealousy of the alien, envy of the latter's superior will and ability, suspicious dread of appearing inferior in any respect, and an ever-present consciousness that the 'farang' is a dependent. Since the initiation and development of all schemes, as well as the money and men for them, are absolutely subject to the veto of the Minister, it requires a very extraordinary combination of cunning and audacity to elude all these obstacles to the permanence and progress of work nominally entrusted to the European."

This point is a very important one, and Mr. Alfred Milner's admirable work on "England in Egypt" repeatedly emphasises an identical difficulty in that country. He writes: "The Government of Ismail was not wanting in European experts, whether in finance or in other branches of administration, at the very time when it came so hopelessly to grief. But its wisest and most capable employes were without influence. Their counsels were disregarded and their capacity rendered useless. It is not enough to have well-qualified Europeans in the Egyptian service in order to keep things straight. It is necessary that there should be some power behind them to give effectiveness to their advice." And again: "European skill is useless without European authority. Wherever you turn, that cardinal fact stares you in the face" ("England in Egypt," new edition, pp. 224, 286).

The Siamese Government is at the present moment arranging for more European advisers—for the army, the navy, and the Department of Education. Under these circumstances it cannot be too strongly stated that any European going out under the present Siamese *régime* is absolutely foredoomed to disappointment and failure. During the last ten years nearly a score have left Siam in disgust, and *not one has ever succeeded in his aims.*

Minister himself compiled a complete series of new school-books on rational lines to replace the hitherto universal rote-system which is the bane of most Oriental schools. Schools were opened under the Department, a schedule or code was drawn up to show the standards to be aimed at, and to serve for grading and comparing the various schools. Government examinations and certificates were arranged, which were gradually to include in their scope the irregular monastery schools—the only means of education for the common people; the intention being to raise the standard of teaching all over the country by a system similar to that recently introduced into Burmah. Upon this vernacular foundation, which was limited to the three R's (and even of these, reading and writing were practically new in Siamese education), was built up a sound knowledge of English. For this purpose Mr. Morant wrote a series of school-books in Siamese, for the acquisition of English through the medium of the native language—books which undoubtedly laid the foundation of any future development of Siamese education. The characteristic feature of the scheme is the maintenance of the native language as the vehicle of instruction, thus avoiding the evils resulting when the students are trained in England and reach their own country unable to turn their newly-acquired knowledge to any practical account.

So conspicuously successful was this scheme that his Majesty placed the education of all his numerous sons entirely in Mr. Morant's hands, giving him permission to found a special school for the royal princes within the Grand Palace, to be called the Rajakumara College, which it was hoped would in time develop along the lines of Lord Mayo's admirable college of the same name at Ajmere, and by educating the young princes in their own country remove the many dangers which attend their prolonged stay in Europe. It was in furtherance of all these schemes that Prince Damrong came to Europe in 1891 to study methods of national education, and that Mr. Morant engaged and took out to Siam a large staff of teachers, both women



THE GREAT BRONZE BUDDHA, AYUTHIA.

and men, to assist in the further development of their united plans.

Unfortunately, as explained before, when any individual shows signs of conspicuously good work or rising influence in Siam, his brother Ministers feel it necessary to crush him. Thus, immediately on Prince Damrong's return to Siam in 1892, at the most critical moment for grafting the new branches upon the now growing tree of his educational schemes, all its roots were ruthlessly torn up. The prince was transferred to the Ministry of the North, and his work given over to his worst enemy, an old and lethargic nobleman named Phya Bhaskarawongse, whose conspicuous incompetence, to use no harsher word, had necessitated his removal from the directorship of the Customs. He speedily reduced the whole scheme to chaos by closing most of the schools and by ousting the men trained under Prince Damrong and Mr. Morant in favour of his own retainers and job-mongers, ignorant of the very meaning of the word education. Thus Mr. G. H. Grindrod, the Head of the Training College for Teachers, an Oxford man and trained pedagogist, now one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools, was in the position of having his teaching criticised and corrected by departmental "inspectors" whose preliminary training had probably been confined to inspecting spirit-jars and the like on the Custom House wharf.

I turn to the United Services. The Siamese Army List as it figures in the Official Directory must make the Minister of War feel proud indeed at the excellence of all his arrangements and the completeness of his organisation. Not a title is wanting, not a rank left out, not a branch of equipment missing—on paper. To describe what actually exists, however, would be useless, since no one in Europe would believe the plain simple truth. Three batches of Australian horses have been landed during ten years, for the Cavalry, averaging some hundreds each time, of which about fifty altogether have managed to survive the neglect and filth in which they are kept,

and still drag on a mangy existence in large and lofty but utterly neglected stables, whence they issue on state occasions in ragged files, with unkempt riders in tattered uniforms clinging nervously to reins and pommels. The Artillery is no better, with its recently-imported field guns, of which the brass sights were stolen and pawned within a fortnight of their arrival and have never been recovered; while the powder is in one place and the shells in another, and nobody knows where or how to bring them together. As for the Infantry, they come to drill when it suits them, desert by dozens weekly, and carry complaints and start agitations against any officer who attempts discipline. Many of them have never fired the rifles they carry; in fact the spirit of soldiery is as totally lacking in them as in a street mob. The officers—but here words fail. Imagine a Cadets' School, of imposing proportions and appointments, with four or five hampered European instructors, where young Siam is comfortably housed and fed and paid some thirty shillings a month to wear a uniform and play at studies which are never carried out; where the very simplest control and training are resented; and where military tactics from English text-books, fortifications on the black-board, and military engineering in the field, figure on the curriculum of youths who can read their own language but poorly, cannot spell c-a-t in English, and only know enough arithmetic to check a good money bargain over a ring or a necktie in a Chinese pawnshop. To such a pass has come a nation who once fought and conquered the Burmese, wiped out the Peguans, repulsed the Annamites, subjugated the Malays, and developed Siam from a small hill-tribe to the possessors of the greater part of the peninsula of Indo-China! These ancient qualities, it is only fair to say, still show themselves in the common people when they are sent soldiering, in their own fashion, in the jungle or on the frontier. The explanation is that Siam has aged the *farang* method without the *farang* spirit. There is actually no word for "discipline" in the Siamese language.

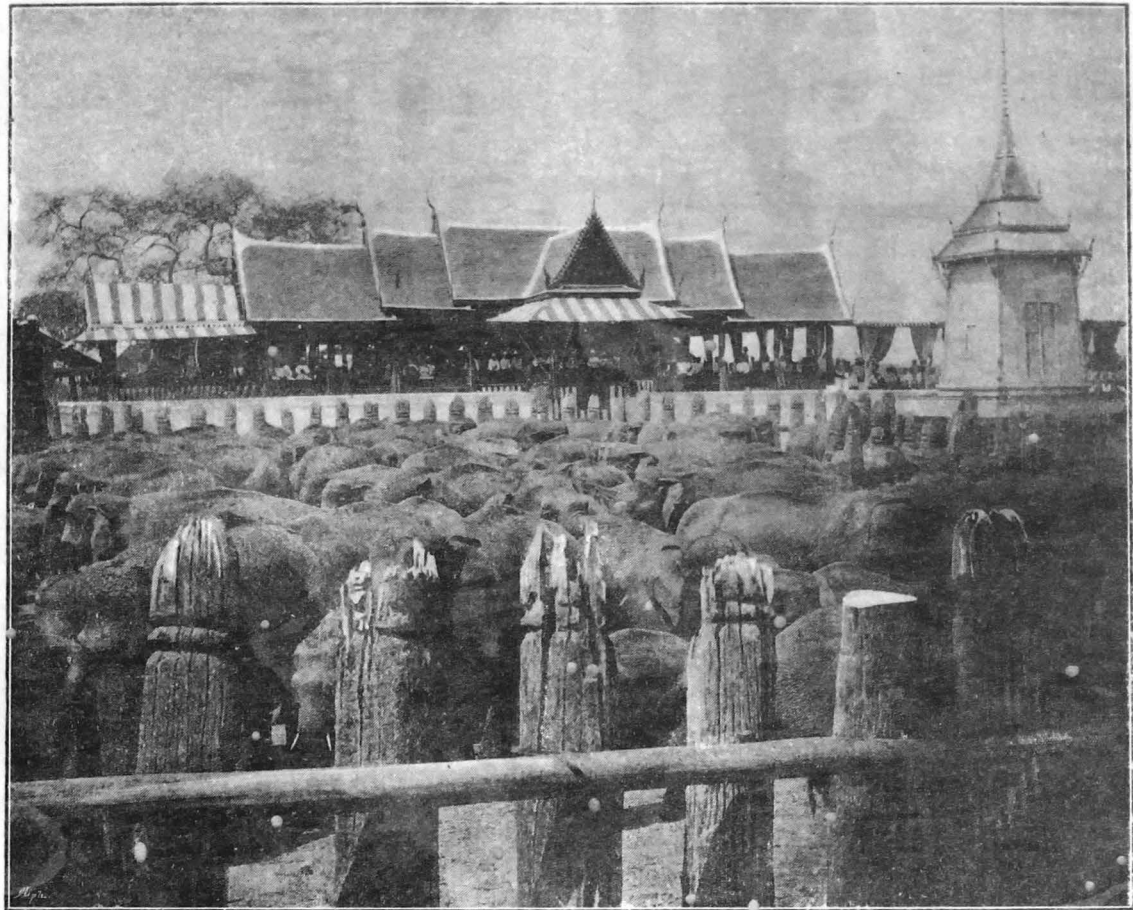
Of the few youths who have had some sort of military training in Europe not one has been allowed even to enter the service in Siam on his return, much less to have any authority to put things straight; while the indefatigable Dane, Major Schau, who has vainly given them his best endeavours for over ten years, has had each regiment taken from him in turn so soon as he has begun to bring it in the least degree into shape. Yet a more easily-led race than the Siamese has never existed; under European management and full control, with regular pay and steady discipline, self-respect would soon be developed, and troops might be turned out at least as serviceable as those of Burmah.

As for the other branch of his Siamese Majesty's service, the Navy, while the pretensions are less, the realities in some respects are better. The Danish officer M. de Richelieu, of whom I have already spoken, has given many years of labour to this, and in alliance with him, Pra Ong Chorn, unique among Siamese officials for energy and integrity, has created a large body of marines who possess at any rate the elements of discipline, however much they may lack technical efficiency. They are supposed to man the forts, supply the fighting crews for the gunboats, and act as an armed force on land whenever one is required, though their whole training for these duties consists of a little elementary drill and the bare knowledge of how to discharge a rifle. The discipline which does characterise them, and which yet distinguishes them brilliantly from other Siamese organisations, is directed to wholly different ends. They are neither more nor less than the body-servants of the royal household—another striking instance of the subordination of national interests to royal luxury. Underpaid, harshly treated, and ground by the *corvée*, they wear the uniform of sailors and perform the duties of coolies. When the King goes to Koh-si-chang or Bang-pa-in, the whole navy turns out to effect his household removal, to carry the pots and pans of the Palace retinue of innumerable ladies and women-servants (packing is an unknown art in Siam),

to build their "palaces" and shanties, to water their gardens, to erect and superintend their sanitary conveniences, to drag their jinrikishas, to carry their sedans, to dress up in their processions, and even to catch flies by bucketfuls to facilitate the royal repose.

According to the books of reference the Siamese navy consists of two screw corvettes of one thousand tons and eight guns each, several gunboats, and several sea-going steam yachts; a small cruiser, *Makut Rajakumar*; and the cruiser-yacht *Maha Chakri*, a "ram-ship" of 2,400 tons, 298 feet long, having a speed of 15 knots, and armed with four 4.7-in. Armstrongs and eight 6-pounder quick-firers.

I fear I shall find it difficult to make anybody believe what this paper fiction amounts to in fact. A bigger sham than the Siamese navy has never existed in the history of mankind. A number of vessels of greatly varying sizes are moored in the river opposite the Palace. Of these the larger ones are for the most part hulks, upon which the "marines" live; in some cases even the engines and propellers have been removed. The smaller ones serve as royal despatch-boats for river work, carrying the servants and supplies between the Palace and the two summer resorts. One or two are kept in decent condition for passenger work, but they possess no means of offence or defence. The King's old yacht, the *Oobon*, has succeeded in taking him round the Malay Peninsula, but if it has any guns on board they are of an obsolete and useless character. The *Makut Rajakumar* was built in Hongkong for the Governor of the Philippine Islands, but as he was unable to pay for it, it was sold to the Siamese in 1891. Upon this were put a number of muzzle-loading guns of the most ancient type, which had been lying about in the compound of the arsenal in Bangkok for many years. The *Makut Rajakumar*, however, won immortal fame in the battle of Paknam by sinking the small French trading-vessel the *J. B. Say*. The story of this battle has never been told, and as it is both entertaining and instructive I may linger over it for a moment.



WILD ELEPHANTS BEFORE THE KING, SIAM.

First, with regard to the famous forts. The principal one had, I think, six 6-inch guns on disappearing carriages. Only two men in Siam had even elementary notions of the working of these weapons—Commodore de Richelieu, and Major Von Holck, another Danish officer. The former was in command of the fort of which I have spoken. When the critical moment came he ran as quickly as possible from gun to gun and fired them one after the other. Needless to say nothing was hit. He then crossed the river in a launch and returned to Bangkok by special train. When one of these guns had been fired before the King a few days previous, out of six detonators five failed to ignite. This incident, however, had not shaken the confidence of the Siamese in the efficacy of their defences. The only technically-trained foreigner in Siamese employ at the time was a Danish naval officer, Captain Christmas. He had been placed in charge of the *Coronation*, the worst of the Siamese vessels, if one were worse than the others, and his share in the engagement was therefore necessarily small, consisting chiefly in escaping the ram of the *Inconstant*. The gunners of the *Makut Rajakumar*, into whose heads Captain Guldberg, of the Danish merchant service, had succeeded in hammering some knowledge of how to load and fire the guns above mentioned, had been taken off a short time before and placed in the royal yacht. The *Makut* was therefore chiefly manned by seamen of the coolie class. They had been specially charged not to ram the powder hard into the touch-holes of the ancient weapons, but to pour it in loosely. At the first onset they unanimously took refuge below. Leaving the wheel for a moment, Captain Guldberg chased them on deck again. When he desired to fire he discovered of course that the powder in the touch-holes was rammed as hard as a stone. He had to pick it out with his open knife from one gun after another, which he then fired in turn with his own hand. As he was not only his own gunnery lieutenant but navigation officer as well, he was then compelled to return to the bridge. After a trick at the wheel he again descended to the deck and

discharged his pieces once more. It reflects the greatest credit upon him that he was able to hit the *J. B. Say* under these circumstances. Her captain—who afterwards explained that he had “comme artillerie que mon fusil de chasse avec des cartouches à plomb No. 10”—and crew were formally arrested next day, blindfolded, and conveyed to the arsenal under guard. Amongst other incidents there, on asking for water they were given filth in a basin to drink. On the arrival of Commodore de Richelieu a few hours later they were informed that they might go anywhere they liked. One other Siamese vessel of war took part in this fearsome struggle. This was what was called the floating battery, a species of steam-barge upon which a single heavy gun had been mounted. Owing to the lack of tackle, I believe, this could only be loaded when the barge was alongside the arsenal wharf. At the first fear of hostilities, therefore, this alarming weapon was gingerly charged and the “battery” proceeded down the river and came to a standstill in a promising situation. In due course it got rid of its projectile. It is only fair to add that Captain Christmas, of the *Coronation*, Captain Guldberg, of the *Makut Rajakumar*, and Captain Schmiegelow, of the “floating battery,” each claimed the honour of having sunk the only non-combatant present on the occasion.

It will naturally be asked, what was happening all this time to the one really serviceable vessel of war the Siamese possessed—to the *Maha Chakri*, the new Armstrong cruiser-yacht, with its 2,400 tons, its speed of 15 knots, its 4.7 guns, its two fighting masts and its ram? The answer is painfully simple, and is but one more example of the fact that in Siam, king comes a long way before country. The *Maha Chakri* was lying moored in front of the Palace, under strict orders not to move except it might be necessary to convey the King up-river. When there was actually a wild intention to collect all available vessels and descend upon the little French gunboats in the middle of the night as they lay at anchor before the French Legation, the

Maha Chakri was not to be included in the attack, although her tonnage exceeded that of all three French boats together by 600 tons. But even had there been any intention of using her, it could hardly have been carried out. Not once, I believe, since her arrival in Siam had her guns been fired, and nobody in the kingdom, except two or possibly three of the Danish officers, had any idea of the process. Her ammunition was put on board for the first time a few hours before the affair of Paknam. Moreover, her engines, which were large and complicated, could not have been worked without the English engineers, no Siamese having the remotest notion of their management, and these men as British subjects could of course take no part in the hostilities.

Such was the force against which the French gunboats had to contend. To complete the farce, it only remains to add that M. Pavie, the French Minister-Resident, accompanied by M. Hardouin, Consul-General, and Commander Bory of the *Inconstant*, proceeded to the Foreign Office next morning, and Prince Devawongse, Minister of Foreign Affairs, "congratulated Commander Bory upon his skill and daring in forcing the entrance." The same day, it being July 14th, all the Siamese vessels in the river were dressed with flags, the tricolour at the peak, in honour of the French national *fête*.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE TRUE STORY OF FRANCE AND SIAM.

ON September 1, 1858, the French fleet entered Tourane Bay, to bring pressure upon the King of Annam on behalf of the French missionaries, and captured the town. On February 17, 1859, Saigon, the principal city of Cochin-China, was captured by a combined French and Spanish force, and the province in which it was situated was annexed two years later, the delay being caused by the Anglo-French war with China. This process occupied, including delays, less than three years.

On June 5, 1862, France made a treaty with the King of Annam, by which were ceded to her the provinces of Mytho, Bien-hoa, Saigon, and the island of Poulo Condor. In June, 1867, the rest of Cochin-China, namely, the provinces of Vinh-long, Chan-doc, and Hatien, was annexed by France. The Vicéroy, Phan-than-Giang, poisoned himself, "noble victime d'une politique cauteleuse qu'il avait inutilement combattue"! This process occupied five years.

So much for Cochin-China. Meanwhile, on the plea of dynastic troubles in Cambodia, a treaty was made on August 11, 1863, inaugurating a form of French protection over the ancient kingdom of the Kmers. On January 15, 1877, very extensive additions were made to French privileges and rights of interference, and as the "difficulties" in the way of good government seemed insuperable, a proclamation was made on June 18, 1884, in the name of the French Republic, and signed

by the French Governor-General, declaring a new constitution, the abolition of Crown property, and the commencement of a French administration throughout the whole kingdom of Cambodia, keeping up only the form of the native government. This process was completed in eleven years.

To pass to Tongking. In October, 1873, French ships under Garnier first entered the Red River to obtain the opening of its channel to French trade. Soon "difficulties" arose, and on November 20, 1873, the citadel of Hanoi was captured, heavy indemnities were paid by Annam, and France placed the province under a partial protectorate. This was extended over the whole of Tongking in 1883. This had taken ten years to effect.

Finally Annam itself, once the central suzerain over all the above-named vanquished countries, was finally reduced to submission by the bombardment of Hué, and brought under a complete protectorate by the same treaty of August 25, 1883.

In face of such a record of rapid extension developing itself through various stages of political protection, and culminating in wholesale annexations, France's neighbours in Indo-China may well have felt uneasy at any fresh manifestations of her interest in these regions. And any one who knew the boundaries of Siam as existing in 1870, may imagine with what misgivings the Siamese Government must have read the following statements in M. Lanessan's book "L'Expansion Coloniale de la France," published in 1886:—

"On the south-east of Laokay the frontiers between Yunnan and the States tributary to Burmah and Siam are very vague; we have every interest in leaving them in this shape, in order to be able to push them back some day to the Mekong. . . . On the west, from the frontier of Yunnan to the mouth of the Se-Moun, the Mekong ought to be the frontier of our Empire. . . . From the Se-Moun our Empire should cross the Mekong, include the secondary basin of the Se-Moun, join the northern end of the Great Lake, and include the provinces of Battambang and Angkor, which has always formed part of the kingdom of Cambodia (pp. 500-501). . . . The basin of the Se-Moun, which belongs to the basin of the Mekong, is separated from the basin of the Menam, which represents Siam properly so-called, by a mountainous and desert region, which constitutes a natural and scientific frontier between the basin of the Mekong and that of the Menam. . . . That mountainous frontier ought to be considered by France as the natural limit of

her Indo-Chinese Empire on the side of Siam. Having retaken the Great Lake provinces, which formerly were dependent on Cambodia, and the basins of the Mekong and the Se-Moun, we ought to adhere to the policy of respecting, and, if necessary, protecting the independence of Siam (p. 470)."

Great indeed was the Siamese dismay on hearing in May, 1891, that the writer of these words was being sent out by France as Governor-General of Indo-China with a large credit for purposes of colonial development, and that in his hands would lie the choice of the particular methods to be adopted by France for this "respecting, and, if necessary, protecting the independence of Siam."

These misgivings were soon to be confirmed. In November, 1891, M. Ribot began the process, by declaring in the Chamber of Deputies that "all the countries lying eastward of the Mekong, from the point where it leaves China, must be considered as belonging to France." At the same time historical researches were published in France, showing that Annam had in past times been in possession of all the country on the east of the Mekong, and even of large portions of territory on the west bank. We hear next of authoritative announcements that though Siam might have gained ascendancy over these districts from time to time in the past, and might indeed be in active occupation of them at the present time, yet Annam's territorial rights could not thus be allowed to lapse, and that the time was now come to insist upon them.

It must be noted that both M. Garnier, the great French explorer, and other authorities fully admitted, and all the French maps clearly showed, that Siam had undoubtedly been in possession of these territories as far back as 1866 at least, probably even 1836, but this was not held by France to give a valid title to any territories that had once been under Annamite rule.

Some French claims* in this direction had already made

* There were questions of boundary in dispute at this same period between England and Siam regarding the Mekong States, but only in its northern portions, above Latitude 20. As I shall deal with these questions in the next chapter, I shall now eliminate them as far as possible during our consideration of the purely Franco-Siamese questions.

themselves heard in 1889, as shown by the following letter from Lord Salisbury to the Earl of Lytton, on April 3, 1889 :—

The French Ambassador called upon me to-day, by appointment, to make a proposal for the neutralisation of Siam. He stated that the French Government had a twofold object in view. They wished to establish a strong independent Kingdom of Siam, with well-defined frontiers on both sides; and they desired to come to an arrangement by which a permanent barrier might be established between the possessions of Great Britain and France in the Indo-Chinese Peninsula. Such an arrangement would be advantageous to both countries and would prevent the complications which otherwise might arise between them.

It would be necessary in the first instance, that the frontier between Cochin-China and Siam should be fixed, and Her Majesty's Government would no doubt desire a settlement of the boundaries of Burmah.

As regarded the frontier of Cochin-China, the French Government did not wish to extend it to Luang Prabang, but they would propose to draw a line from a point nearly due east of that place southwards to the Mekong, and *below that point to make the river the dividing line between the two countries* until it entered the territory of Cambodia. They considered that, both on the French and English side, the boundaries of Siam should be defined up to the Chinese frontier.

The last few lines give a clear statement of the French territorial claims as they then stood. After various negotiations between France and Siam, it was at last proposed that a joint Commission should be appointed to decide upon the frontier between the two countries, and that in the meantime each side should observe the *status quo*. The precise conditions of this interim arrangement are given in Captain Jones's despatch from Bangkok to Lord Salisbury, on January 6, 1890 :—

As the existing situation of the contested districts will be maintained until modified by the decisions of the Joint Commission, Siam will continue to hold the Basin of the Mekong from (about) the 13th to the 22nd parallel of north latitude, with the exception of three small districts on this side of the Khao-Luang range, settled by the Annamites, where the routes from the east debouch from the mountains into the plains. These are :—

Ai-Lao-Dign, in latitude	17° north.
Kia-Heup, "	17½°.
Kam-Muan (about) "	18½°.

Beyond these to the north, the Siamese hold the districts called Pan-Ha-Thang-Hok ("the nation of five or six Chiefs"), and the French will continue to occupy Sipsong-Chu-Thai ("the twelve small Siamese States"), from which they have succeeded in driving the Chin Haws and other marauders.

* Siam, No. 1 (1894), No. 3. All the diplomatic correspondence which follows in smaller type is taken from the same much-edited Blue Book, and may be found under the dates quoted.

The terms of this arrangement are of considerable importance ; for the subsequent hostilities arose out of allegations brought by France against Siam (as also by Siam against France), that the conditions of this *status quo* had been violated. The actual truth on either side was exceedingly hard to prove, as the country in dispute had been but poorly surveyed, and reliable maps were almost unobtainable.* It was definitely advanced, however, by France that Siam had pushed her posts forward so far eastward as to be within forty miles of Hué.

Meantime, from 1889-1893, the French Colonial authorities had been sending expeditions throughout the whole of the Mekong valley, and France soon reiterated her accusations of Siamese encroachment and made definite claims to all territory east of the left bank of the Mekong. The points at issue are clearly given in a despatch from the Marquis of Dufferin to Lord Rosebery on February 7, 1893 :—

In my despatch of the 25th ultimo I forwarded to your Lordship a report of the discussion upon the Foreign Office Estimates with regard to the alleged encroachments of the Siamese on districts stated to be under the protection of France on the left bank of the Mekong. The charges brought against the Siamese Government are summed up in a speech of M. François Deloncle, contained in the full report of the debate. M. Deloncle asserted that the Siamese persistently ignore the rights of the kingdoms of Annam and Cambodia over the whole of Laos and the territories situated on the two banks of the Mekong, . . . that the Government were still of the opinion expressed by their predecessors two years ago, to the effect that the left bank of the Mekong was the western limit of the sphere of French influence, and that this opinion was based on the incontestable rights of Annam which had been exercised for several centuries. He added that these rights were too important to be abandoned, and too well established for the Siamese to persist in contesting them in the presence of the determination of France to put a stop to their violation.

These statements show a distinct advance in the French Colonial Policy, from the attitude of maintaining the *status quo* till a Commission could settle the question, into that of ignoring

* M. Pavie's magnificent map was not published till 1893. The Siamese Government Survey Map published under Mr. Macarthy's auspices cannot pretend to accuracy of boundaries, is largely made up of guesswork, and is useless for political purposes.

all discussion and peremptorily insisting on the immediate recognition of French claims.

These public announcements were the signal for the commencement of still further active developments in French policy; and that this was clearly realised by the British Government is shown by the following letter from Lord Rosebery to Lord Dufferin, on March 8, 1893:—

M. Waddington spoke to me to-day on the subject of the Mekong River and the boundaries of Siam. I pointed out to His Excellency that there seemed to be one initial difficulty. It was that the Mekong appeared to run through Siam, and that we could hardly say that one part of Siam was under British influence and another part under French. M. Waddington rejoined that his Government did not admit that any part of Siam lay on the left bank of the Mekong, but regarded the country lying on that side as belonging to Annam. I could not conceal my surprise at this communication.

When we remember the numerous explicit announcements of the French intentions and claims to the left bank which I have already quoted, we must regard this surprise as being diplomatic in character. Plans soon developed into action, as evidenced by the following telegram from Captain Jones, V.C., the British Minister in Bangkok to the Earl of Rosebery, under date of March 10, 1893:—

Charge of invading Annam has been brought against Siamese Government. They protest, and are prepared to refer matter to arbitration, but French Government seem to be unwilling to accept this.

How did the Siamese meet this new development? The next telegram from Captain Jones (March 15th) clearly shows:—

Instructions have been received by the French Minister to put forward a claim bringing the boundary of Annam up to the eastern bank of the River Mekong. The Siamese Government protests against this pretension on the part of Annam, which implies an increase of territory. They insist that any delimitation must be based upon actual possession, and that such a basis can only be modified by any rights which can be justified by the French. Siam is willing to refer any doubtful points to arbitration.

In thus speaking of "insistence" it is plain that Siam was determined to put her foot down, and refuse passive acquies-

cence. She is willing to submit to arbitration as a possible solution; but in any case she definitely refuses the French demands as at present made, and prefers to face the worst. I may remark that this was probably the decision of the Cabinet, the King being away in Koh-si-chang at the time.

A very plain intimation followed from France that resistance would be met by insistence, and that Siam must take the consequences. The situation at this moment is clearly given in the following abstract of a telegram, dated April 12th, sent by the Siamese Minister for Foreign Affairs to his Legation in London, and by it communicated to Lord Rosebery.

The *modus vivendi* proposed by Siam has been refused by France, who insists upon the withdrawal of the Siamese military and official posts east of the Mekong. In their place Annamite posts will be set up, and the French claims will be pushed forward as far as possible.

The Siamese Government are unable to grant the terms asked, but will be ready to submit the matter to international arbitration.

The French gunboat now at Bangkok evidently intends to remain there, and another gun-boat now on the way is expected to arrive on the 8th instant.

Although friendly intentions towards Siam are professed, there is every appearance of forcing unacceptable terms upon the Siamese Government by menaces. Negotiations between the two parties are still pending, but the Siamese Government are determined to resist to the utmost.

It was in fact necessary for Siam to choose definitely which of two policies she would adopt, namely, either to submit to the French claims under protest, as being too weak to hope for a successful resistance, adding perhaps an appeal for a subsequent reference of the whole matter to arbitration; or to make up her mind once for all to resist at all costs. The above telegram clearly shows her to have determined upon the latter policy. This being so, it was manifestly her first duty to take every possible means to carry it through successfully. How far this was done I shall presently show.

France having thus definitely stated her determination, naturally proceeded on her way, and those who were carefully watching events in Bangkok felt no surprise when news came of two important events. On April 3rd M. Delcassé received the following telegram from M. de Lanessan at Saigon:—

In accordance with your instructions and in consequence of the measures I have taken, Stung-Treng was occupied on Saturday by our troops without striking a blow. The Siamese Commissioner and soldiers retired at the summons of the French Resident, who was conducting the operation.

And the next step was taken on April 8th :—

Our troops have occupied the island of Khone on the 4th April without firing a shot. The Siamese Commissioner and soldiers retired at the request of the French Resident. We have already taken up our positions at Stung-Treng and Khone.

Both these places were strategically of the first importance. A traveller who was recently there says that Stung-Treng is a town as large as Bassac, and that it completely commands the route from Annam, and offers an excellent base of operations for the French, should they desire to despatch an expedition westwards, while the island of Khone is one of the largest on the Mekong River, practically commanding the approach to the rapids, and could be held by a handful of men against the most determined assaults.

One of the first steps that the Siamese ought to have taken, if they had been in earnest in their professed determination to "resist to the utmost," was the reinforcement of their small military stations, and the inauguration of a careful plan of defence, at both of these points. But the whole campaign seems to have been conducted, like everything else in Siam, with a great deal of talk and vapouring about the excellence of their intentions, and their firm determination to act up to their position as an independent nation, while the solid work was hopelessly neglected, and the only steps taken were complete shams. The very fact that the garrisons in these places retired on each occasion seems to the European critic an unintelligible outcome of the loud pronouncements of "resistance to the utmost."

What in the meantime was England doing? It is now pretty well known that up till the last moment (even up to July 14th) Siam had counted upon the effective intervention of Great Britain, and had fondly imagined that the whole affair would

prove to be French bluster, which would be baffled by English firmness; but to her great disgust she found that so long as the questions in dispute were confined to the "lower Mekong," the British Foreign Office confined itself to giving advice. Siam had not realised that England could hardly afford to go to war with one of the leading Powers of Europe to help Siam out of the results of her own folly. To all entreaties for assistance answers were returned that the quarrel was clearly one between Siam and France, in which England could have no *locus standi*. Lord Rosebery practically said, "As you say you are weak and helpless, we counsel you to avoid by all means any policy which may provoke France to strong measures," and it is difficult to see, remembering the composition of the British Cabinet, what other reply he could have made. England's attitude was very pointedly announced to the Siamese Government both in Bangkok and in London, as the following telegram from Lord Rosebery to Captain Jones (April 24th) clearly shows:—

Mr. Verney, the English Secretary of the Siamese Legation in London, called to-day at the Foreign Office, and spoke with Sir Philip Currie in regard to the present state of the political relations between France and Siam. He was told that instructions had been sent to you by telegraph to recommend the Siamese Government that they should take no action which would precipitate a rupture with France, and that they should exercise great caution. Mr. Verney inquired whether, in Sir P. Currie's opinion, it would be wise of the Siamese to endeavour to obtain the mediation of European Powers. Sir P. Currie replied that he thought they had much better endeavour to get the best terms they could from the French Government. Mr. Verney said that the French have not yet laid claim to Luang Prabang.

The Siamese, however, preferred to go their own gait, and a Bangkok newspaper of April 11th remarked:—

"Since the arrival of the *Lutin* the Siamese appear to have been pretty busy with war-like preparations. We learn that the Paknam forts are being strongly manned, and that a large force has been moved down to Paknam in readiness for eventualities."

Again, on the 14th:—

"The Siamese authorities are well posted on passing events in the Mekong region, and are hurrying arms and ammunition *via* Pachim, and along the

Bang-pa-kong river to their forces in the Mekong valley. A Siamese steamer has left Pachim with a large supply of guns and ammunition for the Siamese posts along the river Mekong."

Again, on the 18th:—

"The construction of a new fort has been ordered at Paknam with all the despatch possible. The contract has been given to a Chinaman, who is hurrying down materials. Notice has been given to the Governors and population along the east coast from Chantabun southwards to supply no warships with provisions, or in any way assist in victualling them. The Siamese Foreign Minister is said to treat the present crisis very lightly. He counts on Siam being able to place from 9,000 to 12,000 men in the field, and asserts that the Siam of to-day is not the Siam of twenty years ago. The naval department is counted upon to supply 2,000 able-bodied seamen and marines. Phya Surisak might reasonably raise 8,000 or 10,000 men. With this number the Foreign Minister thinks that Siam would make so serious a fight that France would hesitate before beginning hostilities."

Again, on the 28th:— •

"The Siamese are impressing every available man for service, and the fields are said to be entirely denuded of male workers. Guns and ammunition are being eagerly bought up, and the raw levies pushed on towards the eastern frontier. The King is said * to have voted 10,000 catties (about £50,000) from his private purse to be devoted to the buying of war material. Chains and other obstacles are being hurried down to the mouth of the river with the intention of blocking the entrance. Every available pound of gunpowder in the Singapore market has been bought up for Siam."

The vernacular newspaper (*Dhammasaht Vinichai*) put it still more frankly in a long inflammatory article, which ended, "We will form our ranks and give our blood for our country, our King, our religion, our race."

Meanwhile, apparently blind to the hopelessly defective state of her forces, Siam actually undertook hostilities up-country. When the King's half-brother, the Royal Commissioner at Bassac, heard that the small force at Stung-Treng had retired (as before stated) before the French force on April 1st, he at once sent 800 men to drive the French out. These men, while reconnoitring on the river, surprised a party of coolies under a

* This is a fact, and the money was handed over to the Naval Department, but it is impossible to say how it was all expended.

French officer, Captain Thoreux, conveying stores to the garrison at Khone, at once attacked them, and owing to superior numbers easily overpowered them. The coolies abandoned their loads, which fell into the hands of the Siamese, together with the person of the officer, who was made prisoner and kept in custody at Bassac.

I will here note one of the most conspicuous of the many inaccurate versions of their actions which were made from time to time by the Siamese and their representatives with a view to mislead the British Government and conceal the real trend of Siamese policy *when its effects seemed unfortunate*. Seeing that Bassac is in telegraphic communication with Bangkok, and that the Cabinet had been daily sending orders to that district, and had just despatched additional troops to carry them out, it is quite impossible that the Siamese Government were honest in instructing their Secretary, Mr. Verney, to say to Lord Rosebery that "the Siamese Government were not the instigators of this attack, but that there were in the Mekong district a number of half-savage tribes who were ready to take any opportunity to create disturbance." And Mr. Verney could not possibly have made this statement of his own knowledge.

This trick of altering facts was constantly played, and in the total ignorance of Siamese matters which then prevailed at the British Legation in Bangkok it often gained the point at which it was aimed, viz., the rousing of British sympathy for Siam and antipathy toward France. Thus the Siamese policy was that of facing-both-ways; they were defiant in Bangkok, and pacific in Europe. On May 13th Lord Rosebery is assured by the Siamese Government that "the Siamese Government were not the instigators of the attack;" and again on June 4th, that "the encounter was in opposition to their wishes." While, on the other hand, M. Pavie is informed by Prince Devawongse in Bangkok on May 20th, that "The Siamese Government consider that the capture of the French officer referred to was justified by the circumstances. He committed an act of war, being in

command of a hostile and aggressive expedition upon Siamese territory. They are willing to set him at liberty as an act of courtesy towards the French Government, with whom they do not wish to quarrel, but it is not true that they have ever expressed regret at his being taken prisoner. The alleged regrets and apologies on the part of the Siamese Government appear to be inventions made for the purposes of the newspapers in Paris." And this is repeated still more strongly in Prince Devawongse's *note verbale* of June 2nd: "The Siamese Government cannot admit, even indirectly, that in capturing Captain Thoreux when in command of an aggressive and hostile expedition they acted wrongly."

Another glaring example of this same misrepresentation is the statement made by Mr. Verney, of course under instructions, to Lord Rosebery, "that no demands whatever were addressed to the Siamese Government by France before the French troops seized the territory on the east of the Mekong, . . . that no information as to the intentions of the French Government had reached the Government of Siam except that obtained from the newspapers." Whereas, for months previous the French Legation had been urging their claims at the Siamese Foreign Office, and the French Consul had had frequent interviews at the Siamese Treasury about the amount of the pecuniary claims in the flagrant case of M. Baroton; and a fortnight earlier Prince Devawongse had actually received a clear statement of all demands from M. Pavie, as given in Captain Jones's telegram to Lord Rosebery on April 13th. It was this constant prevarication and short-sighted deception, so invariably characteristic of Siamese politics, that finally roused the French Government to desperate measures, and discounted all Siamese protestations at a later date, when perhaps they had a really good case to argue.

The open jubilation in Bangkok when the news was spread of the triumphant capture of a live *farang* officer sufficiently showed that the Siamese were still in their fool's paradise, and the

general determination to resistance was greatly strengthened. The King made personal visits to the Paknam forts, and troops were massed in Bangkok itself. Under these circumstances, it should not have been matter for surprise to the authorities in London—it certainly was not so to any one in Bangkok—to hear the news contained in the following telegram from the British Commander-in-Chief, China, to the Admiralty :—

Shanghai, May 26, 1893.

“ French Admiral in *Triomphante*, Hongkong, *Inconstant*, *Comète*, *Lion*, sailed from Hongkong to the southward, probably for Bangkok.”

Before long, news arrived in Bangkok and London that the French had been steadily carrying out the same forward policy in the northern regions also, and had compelled the Siamese to evacuate the chief posts near the Annamite mountain range, commencing at Kammuon on May 26th. This, however, was at once replied to by the Siamese in the same manner as at Stung-Treng. A strong attack was planned and ordered by another half-brother of the King, who was the Royal Siamese Commissioner at Nong Kai. He sent a body of troops with strict orders to expel the French from the whole of the territory to the east of the Mekong in the Kammuon district, and to “*compel their retirement, by fighting, if necessary, to the utmost of their strength.*” * In consequence of this, on June 13th, a French sergeant and some seventeen Annamite soldiers were killed and all their property destroyed, this being the incident which afterwards gave rise to the State trial of Pra Yot, the Commissioner of the Kammuon district.

Will it be believed that in this matter also the Siamese Government repeated their former manœuvre of throwing the entire blame on the local authorities, so soon as they were threatened with the consequences of their actions? So far, indeed, was this repudiation carried that it was not until ten

* The original written text of these orders was produced by the officer of the Expedition in open court at Bangkok in February, 1894, and every one was struck by the unmistakable directness of their tone as given in the vernacular.

months afterwards that the Cabinet at length definitely acknowledged their responsibility for the action, in an official statement made with Prince Devawongse's sanction in open Court on March 12, 1894; and then only because it had by that time come to be represented in a more favourable light by the European lawyers engaged to defend Pra Yot, as being a distinguished example of military courage.* And even after this, when the French Mixed Court re-tried the case in 1894, and condemned to twenty years' penal servitude the man put forward by the Siamese Government as the author of the so-called *attentat*, Prince Devawongse kept a discreet silence concerning the Cabinet's responsibility, and allowed the sentence to be carried into effect. Yet it was manifest to every one that if the King placed any value on the loyal obedience of his servants or on his own reputation for consistency and straight dealing, his only right course was to reassert the Cabinet's initiative in the action, and inform the French Government that the responsibility and consequently the penalty for the whole affair lay entirely with his Government. But the King's moral cowardice permitted the penalty for the Cabinet's folly to be visited upon the innocent scapegoat who had merely carried out the orders he had received (when to have done otherwise would by Siamese law have cost him his head). This man now languishes in chains in a Siamese prison for having loyally obeyed his officer's orders, and the French Consul makes periodical visits to the gaol to see that the sentence of penal servitude is fully carried out!

Throughout May and June the general war-spirit in Bangkok increased, literally from hour to hour; and offensive and defen-

* The French official account of this incident was (Blue Book, No. 78) that Pra Yot "himself with a shot from a revolver assassinated the Inspector [Groscurin] in his bed, to which he was confined by his illness." This was derived from the evidence of the one witness, Bun Chan, who afterwards disproved it at the State trial under cross-examination. The actual facts were that Groscurin was firing from the window of his house, and was struck by a chance shot from outside, fired in the mêlée, Pra Yot himself *not having a gun*. All this was proved at the trial.

sive operations were continuously carried on. . His Majesty went to Paknam on May 10th, and spent a long time there inspecting the forts commanding the bar of the river, and himself fired one of the guns. The more honest of those in the Royal retinue could clearly see that the forts were incomplete and the ammunition of little use, while the utter want of training of the officers and men was ludicrously conspicuous. But the mere roar of the great gun and the sight of the projectiles as they dropped into the sea far away seemed sufficient to assure His Majesty and his suite of flatterers of the certainty of victory, and many childish expressions of glee and anticipated triumph were uttered.

On May 20th, 400 Siamese troops left for Bassac, and all manner of talk was indulged in at the Cabinet about collecting three divisions of thirty thousand men each and simply sweeping the French into the sea. The fact that these men (even if it had been possible to collect them) would of course have been taken straight from the paddy-fields without knowing a rifle from a right-about-face seemed of no consequence. Moreover, there was not in all Siam a single officer* either properly trained himself or capable of drilling these raw levies; still less one with any knowledge of conducting military operations.

Another of the signs of the Siamese war-fever—perhaps the greatest of great Siamese shams—was the foundation at this date of a Red Cross Society amongst the ladies of the Palace for the treatment of such soldiers as might be wounded in the battles so confidently expected. After much collecting of money and farcical ceremonials, and the sending of hogsheads of Epsom Salts and thousands of smelling bottles and blankets and dozens of cases of surgical instruments of which nobody knew the use, to lie neglected in the jungle,† this strange parody of a noble

* Except the Dane, Major Schau, who was nominally head of the school for Non-Commissioned Officers, and he was kept almost without work until the French had actually arrived off Bangkok.

† These are facts.

effort ultimately showed itself in its true colours, after the famous "battle" of Paknam. So incredible is the tale if told by a traveller that I had better quote the words of a Bangkok newspaper at the time, the truth of which has been fully confirmed to me by eye-witnesses:—

"We referred some weeks back to that much-boomed society known as the Red Cross Society and suggested that the people were being a little humbugged on the matter. We were not wrong. The battle took place on Thursday evening, and the wounded only found their way to the hospital at dawn on Friday" and this, I may add, through the kind exertions of a European who himself took them uninvited to the European hospital, the Red Cross one being shut. The Society did not put in an appearance at the hospital until Sunday, and even then were of no use.* "On Friday and Saturday, when the wounded men needed the greatest attention, the Society was simply not to be found, and a few European ladies very kindly came forward as nurses. . . . The patriotic Siamese Red Cross Society did not even take the trouble to inquire where the wounded men were. . . . No orders appear to have been issued from the Siamese Medical Department, which seems to have been perfectly paralysed. Europeans fought the forts, gunboats, and mines, and Europeans nursed, cured, carved, and attended the Siamese wounded. We beg the Siamese to remember this when next they dream of dispensing with the services of Europeans."

As the war-fever still continued, 200 men were sent to Battambang, for further hostilities on the Mekong; and when the King's brother, the Commissioner at Bassac, telegraphed to Bangkok for reinforcements, Prince Prachak, the Commissioner at Nong Kai, was at once ordered to send on what men he could spare. In vain did England endeavour to bring a pacificatory tone into Siamese counsels. On June 5th Lord Rosebery telegraphed to Captain Jones, "You should use your influence to restrain the Siamese Government from taking any measures likely to bring the dispute with France to a crisis. We are doing what is in our power here to urge upon them the necessity of moderation." But "it is ill work advising a fool," and Lord Rosebery must have smiled grimly on receiving the next day Captain Jones's telegram I have before quoted, beginning as

* As a matter of fact when the two Siamese ladies did come, they merely criticised the treatment adopted by the Surgeon of H.M.S. *Swift*, who had very kindly given his assistance, and spoke in a very high-handed manner of the insolence of the *farangs* in having thus interfered with the prerogatives of the Siamese Red Cross Society; but they left without doing anything whatever themselves.

follows:—"Your Lordship's telegram of yesterday. Siamese Government consider that the capture of the French officer referred to was justified by the circumstances. He committed an act of war, being in command of a hostile and aggressive expedition upon Siamese territory."

At the end of June the King went down in his new yacht to stay for several days at Paknam, so that he could make constant inspections of the work at the forts, and hasten it by his presence. It is true that the work was merely the piling up of earth and bricks, and the inspection both of His Majesty and of the Cabinet was of course entirely without technical knowledge or value. But so feverish was the activity that the whole supply of bricks in Siam was exhausted. On June 19th, His Majesty gave a banquet at Paknam to the principal Princes and officials, and several "patriotic" speeches were made. His Majesty's words were particularly strong, and he ended by saying, "I now desire to inform you all that if anything happens I shall not have the least fear, nor will I tamely submit to circumstances. I ask you one and all to be confident and to feel assured that we shall support each other and defend our country to the utmost of our power and ability." And Commodore de Richelieu and several Princes made speeches in the same tone. No wonder that the more sensible of the Bangkok newspapers published the following comment next day:—

"It is manifest that the King of Siam labours under the conviction that everything is in readiness; that his troops and defences are in excellent order and condition; and that the men in command are thoroughly capable and competent. . . . How far this is an empty dream we all know well. . . . But the King of Siam is surrounded by a charmed circle of his own creation. . . . We can and do expect every single European in Siamese employ, civil or so-called military, when asked for advice to point out to the Siamese most emphatically and unequivocally the madness of this resistance."

Meanwhile the Siamese Minister of Public Works sent a special written order to every pilot forbidding them "to pilot any French man-of-war over the bar into the river," without special orders from Bangkok. When this fact was accidentally

published, the usual policy of duplicity brought forth an immediate denial of it in the Siamese Government organ, the *Bangkok Times*. But the immediate publication of the original document in the other Bangkok newspaper, the *Siam Free Press*, showed the falsity of the Government position in attempting to gloss over their unwise and—in the light of the Treaties—illegal act. At the same time hurried steps were taken for effectually closing the river mouth. Piles and stakes were driven in, near the bar, to narrow the passage. But they were so badly placed that they waved about with the wind and tide, and would hardly have delayed a fishing boat. Two large steamers were sunk so as almost to close the main channel, but so badly ballasted and unskillfully moored, that they soon swung with the tide and lay in the wrong direction. A third hulk was prepared for sinking in the one remaining channel, and lay close by (but without any ballast ready for her) in nominal readiness for completely closing up the entrance at the last moment.

These new steps were taken in response to the receipt of a warning from the French Government on June 23rd, to the effect that “the French fleet had been ordered to proceed to Saigon, and, should the situation demand, it would be sent to Bangkok.” This grave announcement should have made even the maddest adviser pause to consider the probable results of Siamese infatuation. Whatever the facts or the rights of the case might be, France was determined to have her way; she had taken her stand on a few main issues, and would brook no abatement. This is clearly stated in Mr. Phipp’s despatch to Lord Rosebery of June 30th:—

“M. Develle this evening . . . said that he could give me a solemn assurance that the French Government had no idea of interfering with the integrity of the Siamese Empire. But France had three grievances which must be redressed. About six months ago the property, valued at about 80,000 francs, of a French merchant had been seized and sold. A French factory had also been destroyed, and finally Captain Thoreux had been captured by the Siamese, and had not been given up, in spite of repeated promises made during the last five weeks. There was

also the murder of M. Groscurin, committed by a Siamese Mandarin, for which his Government must be held responsible. Only a few days ago His Excellency had told the Siamese Representative that if the fresh promises were broken and these grievances were not redressed, the French Minister would be withdrawn from Bangkok, when Prince Vadhana would receive his passports. . . . If Captain Thoreux were not given up, and any further attempts made to temporise, *France would have to get redress by arms.*"

What could Siam be thinking about, one may well ask, and what were her European advisers about, to let her adopt such a suicidal attitude and prate of resistance without either possessing or taking measures to acquire the decent beginnings of an armed force? This is an interesting point which has been but little understood in England, and deserves, I think, a few words of explanation.

There were at this time only three Europeans who possessed in any sense the confidence of the Cabinet or of the King. These were, first, an Englishman, Mr. Morant, who, taking the common-sense view about counting the cost, naturally advised coming to terms; but he was helpless to stem the torrent of anti-French feeling; his pacificatory advice was too unpalatable to be followed, since it clashed with the ingrained national conceit. Second, a Dane, Commôdore de Richelieu, whose whole interest and excitement naturally lay in the chance of the prestige to be obtained by bringing his naval "properties" on the stage and possibly effecting a great *coup*. Third, a Belgian, M. Rolin Jacquemyns, whose advice and attitude on Siamese policy were, in my opinion, so unfortunate from beginning to end, that it will be worth while to stay a moment to describe his position in the Siamese service, as it had a material effect on the situation both then and afterwards. M. Jacquemyns has a distinguished European reputation for his knowledge of international law. When Prince Damrong during his tour in Egypt met this gentleman and sent word to Bangkok that he was open to an appointment, the possession of a man of such European repute struck the Siamese as a possible basis for a magnificent advertisement. To be able to speak of him as

their "Legal Adviser" would be a means of dazzling the European governments and throwing dust in the eyes of too closely critical *farang* observers. He was therefore engaged at a very high salary, and with a great amount of palaver installed in a villa some four miles away from the Palace, where he would be sufficiently conspicuous as a figure-head, but so far from Court circles that he could not become too pressing with his bodily presence or advice. For about eight months he went through the usual experience of every European employed in Siamese service; his advice, frequently proffered and at first blandly received, was soon deftly avoided, and never at any time followed, while he was treated with every consideration and courtesy, and his natural but futile eagerness for some work to do was kept soothed by an occasional decoration. At last by special decree he was given the wonderful "style" of "General Adviser and Minister Plenipotentiary to the Government of His Supreme Majesty the King of Siam," a title which he always inscribed on his cards, and of which a special Royal proclamation was made in the newspapers. After throwing him this gigantic sop, no further scruples were felt about ignoring his advice and keeping him on the shelf, and so little consideration was shown him that he could not even obtain a clerk, a secretary, or a proper office. From his appointment to the present time he has known scarcely two words of the language and seen nothing of the real life of the King, the Princes, the Ministers, or the officials; and has been kept as ignorant of the real state of the Siamese army and navy as of her finances and judiciary. But to every man comes his chance, and—through Siam's International Court which M. Jacquemyns might have put straight (if he had only been given the opportunity) is as rotten as ever, and her financial system which he might have improved (if he had been consulted about it) is as corrupt as ever—in her foreign politics he has, undoubtedly had a striking influence.

To the national feeling so strongly aroused amongst the

Siamese by the advance of the French upon territory then under Siamese occupation, M. Jacquemyns' welcome theories of "National Rights"—expressed in high-sounding phrases and supported by volumes published in all the languages of Europe—were received with avidity; Siam was charmed to hear her own employee speak so bravely of her inherent rights as an independent nation to the continuance of her integrity and the full exercise of autonomy. M. Jacquemyns as a theorist was not concerned with mere practical details of undisciplined armies and sham navies. If international law declared the rights of a people to their own territory, it was clear to him that Siam must remember and insist upon these rights; and Siam heard him with delight, and responded with eagerness. In his defence it is but fair to repeat that he had undoubtedly been kept in perfect ignorance of the real state of the Siamese forces and other means of defence; so that the subsequent results of his advice came as an immense surprise to him, as was comically visible on July 14th, when he found that the two small French wooden gunboats had easily come up to Bangkok, in spite of the Siamese men-of-war which he had been assured would certainly blow them to atoms.

In this way foreign theories supported native conceit, Belgian advice jumped with Siamese inclinations, and Danish promptings appealed to Royal ambition. With ridiculous defences, useless weapons, and incompetent leaders, Siam rushed to her ruin.

The next stage in this tragi-comedy was the announcement made by M. Pavie to Prince Devawongse on July 10th that the French cruiser *Inconstant* and the gunboat *Comète* were about to arrive; and that, in accordance with the Treaty, Admiral Humann had ordered them to cross the bar on the evening of Thursday the 13th, for which purpose he requested the usual service of pilots. To this definite announcement Prince Devawongse, under M. Jacquemyns' advice, gave the following two-fold reply, which was the prime cause of all the subsequent disasters:—(1) That the reasons advanced by France for sending these boats

were neither valid, nor founded on facts; (2) that the Siamese Government objected "to an interpretation of the Treaty which would give to any Power an absolute right to send into the territorial waters of Siam, and to the Capital of the kingdom, as many war-vessels as they should like. The spirit of the Treaty cannot be that Siam should be deprived of the natural right of any nation to protect itself, and the French Government will easily understand that, under present circumstances, we cannot, without abdicating our right to exist as an independent State, adopt such interpretation." To this M. Pavie replied next day, "I have not failed to inform my Government and the Admiral of the objections made by the Government of His Majesty to their entry into the river. . . . I have equally made known that I have insisted with your Highness that the *Inconstant* whilst waiting a reply, anchors at *Paknam* conformably to the Treaty."

Prince Devawongse in turn replied, "To avoid any misunderstanding . . . I feel obliged to state without any delay . . . that my objections against the *Inconstant* passing the bar are of a general nature, and apply to its anchoring at Paknam as well as its going up to Bangkok. . . . Indeed the reasonable interpretation which, I think, ought to be given to the Treaty, as not depriving Siam of the essential right of any State to watch over its own safety and independence, is applicable to any part of our territorial waters."

The point here at issue is a vital one in any consideration of the Franco-Siamese difficulty. It illustrates perfectly the sophisms with which Siam on this as on other occasions sought to evade her treaty obligations; and it shows how inevitable and indeed justifiable were the steps to which France resorted to maintain her bare Treaty rights; and how easily she gained additional excuses for insisting on her later and more questionable territorial claims. Article XV. of the Treaty of 1856 between France and Siam reads as follows:—"French vessels of war can enter the river and anchor at Paknam; but they must inform the Siamese authorities before proceeding to Bangkok,

and come to an understanding with them as to the anchorage." It thus seems almost incredible that Prince Devawongse with M. Jacquemyns' advice should have ventured to reply to a naval power like France in the words I have above quoted, to maintain the same position again in a long interview, and to repeat it once more in the following uncompromising terms on July 12th: "Notwithstanding your insistence, in our interview of to-day, on having the *Inconstant* and the *Comète* admitted to anchor at Paknam, it is my duty to maintain my peremptory objections, which I made in my preceding letter, against their entering the waters of the Menam, and to declare that, under present circumstances, the Government of His Majesty is unable to consent to the presence in this river of more than one war-vessel of any State. All necessary instructions to that effect have been given to our naval and military authorities."

This was no hasty and unconsidered decision reached in a moment of excitement; nor was it merely due to some "misunderstanding," as the Siamese Government tried to make out in the Royal Proclamation of July 15th. Still less was it true that "the cause of the encounter at Paknam might have been the difficulties of communication with the (Siamese) officers," as was speciously suggested to Lord Rosebery, after the event, by the Siamese Legation in London. It was the deliberate decision of the Siamese Cabinet to disregard their plain obligations under the treaty, on discovering that it did not quite suit their convenience to fulfil them. But what had caused this particular inconvenience? Their own folly in having built their forts *outside* Paknam to command only the approach to the bar, while they had omitted any means of attacking ships lying at anchor *inside* the bar at Paknam, to which spot foreign vessels were free to come under the terms of the treaty. The ancient fort at this spot had been allowed to fall into ruins and is filled with jungle growth. Thus if the Siamese Government kept their Treaty promises, the French gunboats would be able to come unhurt inside the river and lie at Paknam out of reach of the

only big guns that Siam possessed. What then could be more simple than to say that in making those promises in 1856, they had never really intended to sanction the entrance of foreign gunboats? If a promise becomes inconvenient, explain it away; if this be impossible, then break it. So, when these unaccommodating Frenchmen declined to have their treaty rights explained away in this convenient fashion, Siam with a light heart decided to "insist." It is confidently believed now that the French ships only intended to make a demonstration by lying at anchor at Paknam, thirty miles away from the capital, as they were entitled by treaty to do; and their subsequent advance up to Bangkok was occasioned by the deliberate attack made upon them by the Siamese forts, while they were still within the limits assigned to them by the existing treaty.

It is true that the French Government in Paris consented at the last moment to waive their rights to anchor gunboats inside the bar at Paknam; and M. Develle informed Mr. Phipps on the afternoon of July 13th (Blue Book, No. 139), that "it had been decided that such French ships as would be sent would remain outside the bar . . . although . . . the 15th Article of the Franco-Siamese Treaty of 1856 was explicit and allowed French ships to penetrate into the river as far as Paknam, and after previous warning to the Siamese Government to proceed to Bangkok."* But these new orders had only been sent to the French Admiral at Saigon on July 11th, from whence they had to be transmitted to the ships which were then in the Gulf of Siam; and this could not have been done by 5 p.m. on July 13th. The note which M. Pavie sent out to the Commander of the *Inconstant* at 4.45 p.m. (just before the entrance of the gunboats) no doubt informed him of the Siamese objections to his

* As a matter of fact, owing to the difference in longitude, the French ships had actually crossed the bar, engaged the forts, and entered the river, before M. Develle made this statement to Mr. Phipps; and by 5.30 on the same afternoon the news of this could well have reached Paris.

passage and of their determination to resist it, and possibly also of the statement made to him (M. Pavie) by Prince Devawongse that the Siamese Minister in Paris had been assured by M. Develle that the gunboats would not enter. Be that as it may, however, and though the action of the French officers, as Lord Rosebery said, appeared to be "uncontrollable and irresponsible," the fact that definite orders had been given in writing by the King, on the 13th, that his forts should fire upon the French gunboats directly they showed definite signs of attempting to cross the bar, proves that the King did not really expect that the French would waive their treaty rights, and also that Siam was absolutely determined in any case to use force to prevent an entrance.

Thus, on the evening of July 13th, towards dusk, occurred the battle of Paknam, which I have already described. Directly the French ships reached a certain point on the bar, Commodore de Richelieu fired a shot across their bows from his fort to warn them, and on their continued advance he opened fire with all his guns as fast as he could, and the Siamese boats inside the river joined in the attack. The French boats were not materially damaged, but several French soldiers were killed and wounded. Under these circumstances the French Commander, ignorant of how many more forts or attacks might be in readiness for him at Paknam, naturally did not stop there after his entrance, but went straight up to the French Legation, situated on the river about three miles below the Palace, while the Siamese ships followed some distance after him as best they could.*

*So skilfully, however, had the Siamese previously contrived

* The obvious comment upon the discrepancy between the assurances of the French Government and the action of the French gunboats cannot be more suggestively made than in Lord Rosebery's words to Lord Dufferin on Sept. 5th: "However ill-advised and useless the resistance of the Siamese may have been, the responsibility for what followed rests primarily with the French officers, who so acted in flagrant opposition to the engagement made by the Representative of their Government, and who, I observe, have been publicly noted for promotion in recognition of their conduct." This promotion is now an accomplished fact.

to represent the justice of their case, as regards the men-of-war not entering Paknam, that the sound of firing on the evening of the 13th, followed by the apparition of two French gunboats lying unhurt before the Legation, came as an immense shock of surprise to many Bangkok residents. At last the direful news reached the Court (Captain Jones himself, the British Minister, strange to say, going to the Palace about 9 p.m. to confirm it), and instantly the Palace was seething with excitement and crowded with anxious officials, frightened servants, and hurrying troops. In a moment the King and Cabinet had been brought to a fearful realisation of the results which their foolhardy policy might now bring upon them. From 8 p.m. onwards there were few in the Palace who hoped to escape alive that night; every one expected an immediate bombardment by the French Commander, who was enraged, it was said, at having been fired upon in the peaceful exercise of his treaty rights. For several hours the greatest alarm prevailed at the possibility of an immediate landing of French troops, or the looting and destruction of the Palace. Troops hurriedly massed together all unprepared, cavalry hurried out of their stables mingling with them in a dense crowd round the Palace walls, ancient field-pieces, each with its supply of old cannon-balls, jammed together along the Palace road, excited attendants in the Palace, frantically endeavouring to load rifles which they had never seen before—all offered a strange spectacle of helpless confusion, and a striking contrast to the recent boasts that Siam would easily sweep the "French brigands" into the sea. All this for two small wooden gunboats and some 220 men.

At first the Cabinet were fascinated by a plucky but wild idea (suggested by the Danish officers) of sending every available boat and gun and marine down the river in the dark, pell-mell, to smash up the three little gunboats as they lay off the French Legation; but either fear or common sense prevailed. After five hours of fearful tension, the excitement and alarm in the Palace was at last dispelled by the arrival of a letter from M.

Pavie to Prince Devawongse, which said that no attack on the town or the Palace had ever been contemplated or was even now intended; and that the French Minister would visit the Siamese Foreign Office the next morning to discuss the events of that night—an unspeakable relief for the moment, but an unpleasant experience to look forward to. The next morning, however, after various quaint remarks had been made by Prince Devawongse and M. Jacquemyns to the French commander, congratulating him on his gallant entrance, M. Pavie merely stated that instructions from Paris must be awaited. These instructions arrived on July 20th, and are quoted by Captain Jones as follows:—

The following ultimatum, which has to be accepted in forty-eight hours, has been presented by the French to the Siamese Government:—

1. Recognition of the rights of Cambodia and Annam to left bank of River Mekong and the islands.
2. The Siamese shall evacuate, within one month's time, any posts which are there held by them.
3. Satisfaction for the various acts of aggression against French ships and sailors in the River Menam and against French subjects in Siam.
4. Pecuniary indemnities to the families of the victims and punishment of the culprits.
5. For various damages inflicted on French subjects indemnities of 2,000,000 fr.
6. As a guarantee for the claims under clauses 4 and 5 the sum of 3,000,000 fr. in dollars shall be at once deposited, or, in default, the farming of the taxes of Siemrap and Battambang shall be assigned to the French.

In the event of the non-acceptance of these terms the French Minister will leave Bangkok and the blockade of the coast will at once take place.

Thus Siam's penalty for her few days of madness was prompt and pitiless. Great was the excitement during the two days of grace. It is difficult to understand that Siam had not even then learnt the lesson of submission; indeed the British Minister went about the town on the final day definitely stating that everything was satisfactorily settled, that no further penalties would be exacted, and no blockade need be feared. But he little knew the Siamese character; the national conceit had not even yet fully realised the helplessness of the situation. "On the Saturday afternoon, it became

evident that a hitch had occurred somewhere, and that matters were taking an unfavourable turn. The Naval Department had ordered every vessel capable of bearing a gun to be under steam, and the troops were ready for any sudden emergency.* And just before the time of grace expired, an answer was sent by Prince Devawongse to M. Pavie of which the following is an abstract:—

1. The King of Siam declares that no explicit definition has as yet ever been made to the Siamese Government as to what constitutes the rights of Cambodia and Annam on the Mekong. But as His Majesty is anxious at once to secure peace and security for his people he agrees to cede to France the country lying to the south of the 18th parallel of latitude and to the east of the Mekong.

2. The withdrawal of all Siamese posts within the above mentioned territory to take place forthwith.

3. The loss of life which has occurred in the recent actions between the French and the Siamese forces is regretted by the King, and the satisfaction required by France will be given in accordance with ordinary justice and the independence of Siam which the French Government affect to respect.

4. Those found guilty of illegal aggression will receive condign punishment, and the sufferers will receive due reparation.

5. The King agrees to pay the indemnity demanded on account of the claims advanced by French subjects, although the justice of many of them has been denied by the Siamese. His Majesty, however, suggests that a Joint Commission should first investigate these claims.

6. The sum of 3,000,000 fr. required as guarantee will be deposited concurrently with the exchange of notes between the Representatives of France and Siam. After the equitable adjustment of all reasonable claims, the King trusts that French justice will restore to Siam any sum which may remain over.

This compliance with the demands of France will, the King trusts, be looked upon as a proof of his sincere desire to live with the French Republic on terms of friendship.

But this "compliance" produced next day the following reply from M. Pavie to Prince Devawongse:—

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of the reply your Excellency, on behalf of the Government of His Majesty the King of Siam, has made to the communication which I left with you on behalf of the Government of the French Republic. I have taken act of this reply, and without entering upon a discussion of any of the points I note that it involves a refusal of a considerable portion of the left bank of the Mekong. . . . I have the honour to inform your Highness that, in conformity with the instructions of my Government, I am transferring the protection of French nationals and protected persons to the Netherlands Consul-General, and I embark on the *Inconstant*, leaving 26th July.

* *Siam Free Press.*

To this startling announcement Prince Devawongse sent next day a formal reply to express his regret and surprise at this unexpected decision, and to say that no alteration in his previous note could yet be made, as he must first "*insist* for a definition of the nature and extent of what you call the rights of Annam and Cambodia on the left bank of the Mekong." Siam thus still continued to "*insist*," with three French gunboats in the river, several more outside the bar, her forces ludicrously defeated, and not the slightest hope of foreign aid!

On Monday the 24th the French Minister did not hoist his flag at the Legation, and in the afternoon of the 25th (the tide did not serve before) he left Bangkok, with all the French warships, and settled at the island of Koh-si-chang, pending further instructions from France. The penalties of Siamese folly were soon to be enforced. On the 28th, notice was given by Admiral Humann, who had just arrived from Saigon, that a strict blockade would commence on July 29th, and now British merchants began to realise that it was they who were to suffer for Siamese folly. Yet still war counsels prevailed. At one moment it was actually decided to completely close the passage of the river by permanently blocking up the channel with hulks; and every possible preparation for war was debated.

Fortunately Prince Devawongse was at last persuaded by the plain revelation of some startling facts about the conditions of the forts and the ships, to realise the hopelessness of further resistance; and he determined to surrender unconditionally before worse things should happen. He contrived to evade any discussion of his decision in the quarrelling Cabinet, to escape any more theories of "*natural rights*," and to frighten the King into submission. His decision was no doubt vastly assisted by the final crushing of all hopes of British interference and aid, as conveyed to him by Captain Jones in Lord Rosebery's words:—

"The nature of the advice which I have given to the Siamese Government has been constant and consistent in the sense that they should come to terms with the French quickly. It is impossible for Her Majesty's Government now to change this view, or indeed to intervene with advice at this juncture.

"The result of the inquiries that I have been able to make at Paris shows that the tendency of the demands of the French is to increase, and rapidly so, if the Siamese continue to resist the conditions laid down in their ultimatum.

"I am unable to see, under these circumstances, what Siam can hope to gain from maintaining her refusal to accept these conditions, nor what better course remains for her than to accept the French terms at once and unconditionally.

"The engagements entered into by the Siamese Government with Her Majesty's Government in regard to Kyang Chiang need not deter the Siamese Government from this course. The question as to the future status of that province must be discussed directly between Her Majesty's Government and that of France."

The pregnant sentence in the closing paragraph showed them that the last card they had tried to play, in endeavouring to entangle England in the quarrel and so enforce British interference, had completely failed. A note was therefore sent to M. Pavie at Koh-si-chang by Prince Devawongse on the 29th of July, to say that, "His Majesty the King of Siam, being actuated by the most friendly feeling towards France, accepts the demands of the Government of the Republic unconditionally." But the French had now learned wisdom, and discovered the value of Siamese promises to keep any conditions or to fulfil the terms of a treaty; and they therefore very naturally required guarantees, viz. :—

1. The occupation by French troops of the river and fort of Chantaboon pending the evacuation by Siam of the left bank of Mekong.
2. No Siamese troops to be permitted within twenty-five kilometres of the Mekong River.
3. No Siamese armed vessels to be stationed on Toulesap Lake.
4. The right to establish Consulates at Nan and Korat reserved by France.

The occupation of Chantabun by French troops was a bitter pill; for it would be a patent and enduring proof that the King of Siam was no longer absolute in his own kingdom, but lay at the mercy of France. However there was no help for it. England still declined to help. Lord Rosebery telegraphed again to Captain Jones on July 31st, "In order that the French

should have no further opportunity for action or territorial requisition, it is obvious that the Siamese should not hesitate to yield." And so the ultimatum with all its additions was finally accepted. On August 3rd, the blockade was raised, and on August 7th, the French Minister returned to Bangkok and again raised his flag, to the salutes of the Siamese Navy.

It only remained to arrange the details of future relationship, and this task was entrusted to a special Minister Plenipotentiary, sent from France for the purpose, M. Le Myre de Vilers, who was formerly Governor of Cochin-China and is now dictating French terms in Madagascar. He arrived in Bangkok on August 16th, and soon showed that he possessed considerable firmness, and a clear knowledge of the situation.

The King had retired to his Summer Palace some sixty miles up the river, in a state of mental collapse, almost directly after the final surrender had been made and the acute crisis had passed. But M. de Vilers knew that the native mind would try hard to gloss over the dictatory position of the French Envoy and represent it as an Embassy for petitioning the King. He therefore refused to have audience at the summer residence, and insisted that, as the Envoy of France, he must be received with full honours in the Royal Palace at Bangkok. This meant that the King must come down to the capital for the purpose—another bitter pill for the monarch of an independent kingdom. The Siamese saw that they must assent; but, cunning to the last, they cleverly contrived to cover the humiliation by contriving that there should be a Court function in Bangkok requiring the King's presence on the morning of August 20th. The King was obliged to come down for this function, and was thus also at the same time "pleased to be able to grant M. de Vilers an audience in the Grand Palace at Bangkok in the afternoon of August 20th."

The second point in which M. de Vilers showed his keen knowledge of the situation was in refusing to recognise M. Jacquemyns officially, or to allow him to be present at the

negociations. This action was somewhat objected to at the time by the British Government as apparently an infringement of Siamese independence. But it was probably the only way in which any finality could be hoped for from the Conférences. One definite stage of progress was soon reached—the easiest so far as Siam was concerned, since it involved merely a pecuniary loss, which the immense stores of money lying idle in the Palace enabled her to meet without any difficulty. On August 22nd, two and a half million francs (in silver dollars) were handed to the French Legation in Bangkok, and another half million were paid by cheque on Saigon.

But still the difficulties and procrastinations in the negociations were extraordinary. M. Develle had informed Lord Rosebery on September 14th, that the “negociations ought not to take more than a week or at most a fortnight,” whereas the Siamese contrived to prolong them, for six weeks. After a few visits had been exchanged, which had only resulted in useless discussions on the draft Treaty, Prince Devawongse went up to see the King at the summer residence during the first week in September, and finding the state of things there to be hopeless, he retired to his own house immediately on his return to Bangkok for nearly three weeks on the plea of dysentery; and things were once more at a deadlock. The whole Court was up at Bang-pa-in, engaged in processions, pageants, illuminations, and theatres, in honour of a new white elephant, and of the King's fortieth birthday. Some seven thousand persons were packed into the Palace grounds, the King taking close interest in the long processions, paper lanterns, and gaudy shows, while the Envoy of France was waiting to settle the fate of the country. M. de Vilers was thus left with nothing to do, and ominous rumours of increased French demands soon raised a general scare for Siam's independence. Prince Devawongse did not resume negociations till September 26th, and even then the most preposterous arguments were advanced, and the situation was rapidly becoming desperate again. At length M. de Vilers

naturally lost patience, and the French Government in Paris began to grow peremptory. When he next went to the Siamese Foreign Office on September 27th, he listened quietly to a long rigmarole of objections, arguments and prevarications, and then simply placed in Prince Devawongse's hands a Convention, drawn up by the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Paris, embodying "a final statement of all the alterations and conditions that France was prepared to accord," observing, "I leave Siam within four days, whether these conditions be accepted or not; and I shall come here again on Sunday, October 1st, to hear your decision. The Treaty can afford to wait, but there must be no delay as regards the Convention." Thus for the third time a crisis was imminent; the Siamese still declined to give way, and things looked as if the last great disaster must come. The gunboat *Aspic* had her steam up early on Sunday morning, and a pilot on board, ready to leave at a moment's notice. However, at the last moment, the terms were agreed to unconditionally, and the Siamese Foreign Minister and the French Minister Plénipotentary, on October 3rd, duly signed the Treaty and Convention, a *procès verbal* being added to explain matters of doubt. The terms agreed upon, it should be added, contain several points which—taken in connection with the ultimatum, the occupation of Chantabun, and the various possibilities that lie in the next Treaty still to be drawn up between France and Siam—suggest many serious considerations regarding the future of Siam and the crucial question of English interests and trade generally in Indo-China.

I have now given the true story of French action in Siam in 1893. What is the net result? In five months France has obtained from Siam three million francs. She has deprived Siam for ever of the means of defending her eastern frontier, of resisting any further encroachments there, and of keeping in order those parts of her territory which border on French possessions. She has obtained specific commercial and other

advantages for French subjects in Siam. She has annexed some fifty thousand square miles of territory which had been recognised as Siamese, and occupied by Siamese posts, during the past eighty years at least. And finally, she still retains a military occupation of Chantabun, the second great port of Siam, commanding the Gulf of Siam and also the entrance to the three richest provinces, the time-limit of this occupation being worded in the vaguest possible terms. What the future will bring it is impossible to say, but I fear it must be regarded as certain that the question of Siam will again be the subject of grave discussion between the Governments of Great Britain and France. It is for this reason alone that I have felt compelled to give so long and unsparing an account of last year's events. In all European quarters the actions and position of the Siamese in the matter have hitherto been misunderstood and misrepresented, and I am convinced that nothing but an accurate insight into the realities of the past can supply the means of preventing vastly greater and more far-reaching evils in the future.

CHAPTER XXX.

ENGLAND AND THE FUTURE OF SIAM.

IN the previous chapter I confined myself to a simple and impartial narrative of the events which took place during the Franco-Siamese difficulty between March and October, 1893. Out of these events have grown several grave questions, three of which are matters of special importance to England. These are—(1) the frontier defence of our Indian Empire on its eastern boundary over some 300 miles; (2) the commercial interests of England in Indo-China; and (3) the probable extinction of Siamese independence.

In order to understand the more pressing questions of frontier delimitation and territorial acquisition in Indo-China, and especially on the Upper Mekong, some of the geographical features of the country must be clearly grasped. The River Mekong, or Lan Tsung Kiang as the Chinese call it, rises in the mountains of Thibet, and in its earlier course flows due south, parallel with the Salween on the west and the Yangtze on the east. On entering the province of Yunnan, the Yangtze goes off to the eastwards through some of the richest provinces of China; while the Salween and the Mekong pursue parallel courses, at a comparatively small distance apart, for some hundreds of miles towards the south. The Salween ultimately flows out through Burmah into the Indian Ocean, while the Mekong does not enter Burmah proper, but passes through the Shan States, and on reaching latitude 20°, takes a sharp bend to the east for some 120 miles, and after again turning due south at Luang Prabang

for about 160 miles, makes precisely a similar turn to the east at latitude 18°. After keeping this easterly course for some 150 miles, it resumes its southerly course, and skirting the whole length of Siam, finds its way into the China Sea through the French protected kingdom of Cambodia.

It must always be remembered that the chief factor in the commercial politics of the Far East is the trade of China. To tap the markets and develop the resources of the interior of that great country has long been the keenest ambition alike of England and France. Yunnan, Szechuan, and Kweichau, the great provinces of south-western China, are the special objects in view at present. The political rivalries of England and France in Indo-China during the last two decades may practically be summed up in one phrase as a race for Yunnan. When France seized Tongking she hoped to win her way to this great potential wealth by means of the Red River, which it was hoped would bring Yunnan into direct communication with the newly-created French Colonial Empire; and the founding of her colony at Saigon was no doubt also intended to achieve the same end, by obtaining possession of the mouths of the great Mekong River. England on her part had by the annexation of Upper Burmah made herself actually conterminous with these provinces of China; she had gained control over the whole of the Salween River, and over a certain portion of the Mekong River also, and she held the numerous passes adjacent to these great waterways, both of which actually penetrate into Yunnan itself.

This in 1892 was the position of the two rival competitors in the race for Yunnan. A few further geographical details are necessary to explain the origin of those acute difficulties between England and France in 1893, which so nearly led to a complete rupture. The annexation of Upper Burmah had given to England definite territorial rights over certain Shan States lying between Siam and China, and astride of the Mekong. With a view of contriving a scientific frontier on the north-east boundary of her Indian Empire, and of avoiding any possibility

of being "limitrophe" with France, the British Government had contemplated the cession of these rights to either China or Siam. The northernmost of these particular Shan States—that is, the one next to China—is commonly called Chieng Hung (Kyaing Hung—Chê-li in Chinese); that on the south—next to Siam—being known as Chieng Kheng (Kyaing Chaing). The question at issue in 1893 was no new one. The Anglo-Siamese Boundary Commission had been working for some years past to fix the frontier between Burmah and Siam, and by 1893 it had completed the delimitation practically as far as the Mekong, as will be seen on reference to my map. The State of Chieng Kheng was then handed over to Siam by England, with the express stipulation that English rights to it, as regards both sides of the Mekong, would revive, should Siam at any time abandon it.* Chieng Hung, on the other hand, which is just north of Chieng Kheng, has now been ceded by England to China, in connection with the Anglo-Chinese Boundary Commission which has also been working for some time past,† with the same stipulation of England's reversionary rights. Under these circumstances it was but natural that England should begin to feel some anxiety last year when it became apparent that the French advance towards Siam westwards from Tongking and Annam was not to be limited to the region of the Lower Mekong—where it did not touch our possessions or interests in any way—but was directed equally to the upper reaches of the river, and was in fact, however much this might be concealed by diplomacy, primarily directed at the possession of the whole of this great waterway from Saigon to Yunnan.

By July, 1893, the matter admitted of no further doubt, and demanded immediate attention. The French ultimatum to Siam (the history of which is given in the preceding chapter) was peremptory, and demanded the surrender of territory nearly

* Siam, No. 1 (1894), No. 30.

† The French Government are believed to have raised objections to this arrangement; and the questions involved are likely to be very difficult of solution, for reasons which I shall presently endeavour to explain.

100,000 square miles in extent. It was impossible to mistake the trend of events, for M. Develle openly showed his indignation at Siam's refusal to recognise any French rights above latitude 18° on the left bank of the Mekong. At the same time the French Chamber began to speak confidently of French rights on the Mekong as extending continuously up to 23°. At this point England saw it was time to enter her protest, unless the case were to be allowed to go entirely by default. Indeed, even China awoke from her lethargy, and suggested to the French Government that some mistake must have been made, since Chinese territorial rights existed on the east bank of the Mekong for a considerable distance south of 23°. England in her turn sent a plain reminder of the actual extent of British rights in the same regions, and a warning that she could not permit any infringement thereof. Lord Rosebery explained to Lord Dufferin the views of the British Government as follows:—

“We cannot doubt that the term ‘left bank’ is far too comprehensive in its scope. It cannot of course apply to any districts east of the Mekong River which the Siamese Government have no power to cede, whether from rights of sovereignty, suzerainty, or reversion possessed by other Powers. And secondly, we are confident that the expression ‘left bank of the Mekong’ is used subject to the assurances repeatedly given by the French Government that they would respect the independence and integrity of the Kingdom of Siam. It is clear that any provinces which indisputably form part of that Monarchy could not properly be made the subject of any such demands by the French Government.”

On July 23rd, Lord Dufferin put the matter quite tersely and clearly to M. Develle. He supposed that “in using the term ‘the left bank of the Mekong’ his Excellency could not have intended to claim for France the immense tracts of Siamese territory extending not to the east and abutting upon Annam, but to the northwards of the Upper Mekong, and conterminous with China, not to mention the districts lying beyond, which had been incorporated with Her Majesty's Empire of India after the conquest of Burmah.” But M. Develle in his reply would not definitely state what the limits of the French claim were, and Lord Dufferin was therefore compelled to press his unwel-

come inquiries a little further, and ask whether "the extensive territories (near the two elbows of the Mekong at 18° and 20° respectively) between the Mekong and the actual French boundary depicted upon the existing French maps, comprising the principality of Luang Prabang and other districts, were also claimed by France?" This compelled M. Develle to declare himself, and the truth about French aims was at last partially disclosed by the astonishing statement that "France claimed a right to Luang Prabang and the adjacent countries as being ancient and historic dependencies of Annam; and that furthermore she had always insisted that her territorial sovereignty extended all along the left bank of the Mekong."

The French Government thus admitted at last that its claims about historic suzerainty and the like had undergone a remarkable extension during four years. In 1889 she disavowed any claim to Luang Prabang: in 1893 she "had always insisted on it"! This is proved by Lord Salisbury's despatch of April 3, 1889, where he quotes M. Waddington as having made the following statement:—

"The French Government did not wish to extend the frontier of Cochin China to Luang Prabang, but they would propose to draw a line from a point nearly due east of that place southwards to the Mekong, and below that point to make the river the dividing line between the two countries until it entered the territory of Cambodia."

And, to anticipate for a moment, Lord Rosebery met M. Develle's new claim for France by the following conclusive argument addressed to Lord Dufferin on Sept. 2, 1893:—

"It was at least certain that the State of Luang Prabang had for a period of over seventy years acknowledged Siamese suzerainty, and that it had for some years been practically under the control of a Siamese Commissioner. The French Government had, moreover, themselves acknowledged the sovereignty of Siam at Luang Prabang by the signature of the Convention of the 7th of May, 1886, which provides for the appointment of a French Vice-Consul there, and by the request which they subsequently addressed to the Siamese Government to grant an exequatur to the officer so appointed. It is further an undoubted fact that the country to the west of the Nam U up to latitude 22° has for some time been in Siamese possession, that the Siamese military posts extend along the course of that river up to that latitude, and that the Siamese Province of Maung Nan reaches some

60 miles to the north of the Mekong, where that river runs westerly from the town of Luang Prabang.

“There was therefore to the east of the British possessions, where they approach or touch the Upper Mekong, a broad tract of territory generally admitted by French as well as by other explorers and travellers to belong to Siam. Moreover, on the French official map of Indo-China, published by the Ministry of War in 1886, there is a distinct frontier line drawn considerably to the east of the Nam U, and described as ‘the frontier of Annam according to the Annamite maps’; while the country to the west of this line is stated to belong to States under the suzerainty of Burmah and Siam.”

France, however, had taken up her position, and was determined not to be stopped by either argument or interference from England. Finding, therefore, that M. Develle still insisted on his policy, Lord Dufferin proceeded in his turn to—

“insist on the incompatibility of this confiscation by France of so considerable a proportion of the Kingdom of Siam with M. Develle’s and the French Government’s previous assurances that they had no intention to allow their disputes with Siam on the Lower Mekong to entail any measures which would jeopardise her integrity or her independence. How could these professions, I asked, which I knew had been made in perfect sincerity, be reconciled with this slicing off of what amounted to nearly a third of the kingdom?”

M. Develle, however, refused to budge. In vain Lord Dufferin pointed out that this step “would bring France into direct contiguity with Burmah, . . . and that the approach of a great military Power like France to a frontier at present lying naked to attack could not be regarded by us with indifference.” Moreover, he impressed upon M. Develle “the extreme gravity which the situation might assume were the French demands to be pressed upon Siam beyond what was just and reasonable, and in conformity with the legitimate interests of other Powers.” And that “such a transformation of the French pretensions was undoubtedly calculated to excite alarm in England, and the most serious apprehensions in the mind of Her Majesty’s Government.”

M. Develle’s only reply was that “the terms of the first Article of his ultimatum *having been published to the world*, and all France being acquainted with them, he could not now alter them, especially under manifest pressure from us”! But he

seems to have realised that a less uncompromising attitude would perhaps be advisable, so he consented to consider whether any arrangements could be made for "leaving a 'buffer' between the Asiatic possessions of France and England, and thus leave the door open for future negotiations." With this very small concession the Foreign Office was content. Thus the crisis passed, and the hatchet was buried for a time. A striking light, however, is thrown upon the real nature of the relative positions of France and England on this question, by a remark made by M. Develle during this same conversation, that the injury which the French action was inflicting upon some 2½ millions sterling of English trade, was "merely an accident of the situation," and therefore could not be allowed to influence the solution of the question at all.

The British Foreign Office seems, however, to have taken heart of grace again after a few days of uncomfortable thought, and to have realised at last the importance of all that England was surrendering so tamely to France; for Lord Dufferin returned to the charge on July 26th, by these remarks to M. Develle:—

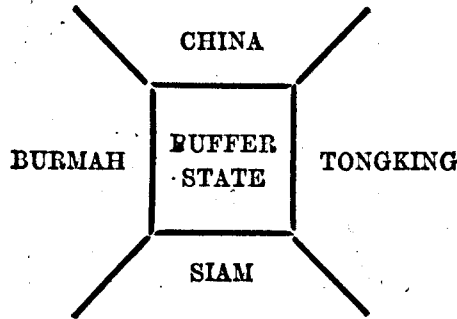
"It was true that within the last twelve months a mysterious revolution had occurred in the minds of French geographical authorities, but an honest man must be as convinced as I was that the district in question was, and had been for nearly a century, *bonâ fide* Siamese territory, and that it could not be confiscated by France without a flagrant infringement of the formal assurances he had given us not to impair the integrity of Siam. As for the pretension advanced by France *ab antiquo* to the left bank of the Mekong, such a supposition was not only contradicted by M. Waddington's express declarations on the subject, but by the further fact, that under the Franco-Siamese Convention of 1836 the French had claimed the right of sending a Vice-Consul to Luang Prabang, which in itself was an absolute proof that the locality belonged to Siam."

"But it was a bark without any intention of a bite. And M. Develle clearly saw this, and promptly "put up the shutters on this compartment"—as Lord Dufferin himself phrases it—by curtly stating that it was impossible—"in the excited state of public opinion"—to withdraw or modify the terms of the ultimatum. Plainly, then, England must quietly acquiesce; if she would not bite she must not bark; and the matter was again allowed to pass.

Nothing was now left but to try and save that portion of the territory which more directly affected the policy and threatened the interests of India, since, as Lord Dufferin said, "it was quite out of the question that we should accept an arrangement which made France conterminous with our Indian Empire." So we find Lord Dufferin expressing to M. Develle, the hope that France would consent to the formation of some buffer territory which would prevent the actual contact of England and France on the Indian frontier. Even to this, however, M. Develle's "cordial" assent was only given on condition that the boundary proposed by Lord Dufferin for this buffer State should be drawn much further westwards—in fact, on the watershed of the Nam U instead of the river itself—so as to leave much more territory to France; and that at the same time England should give up some of the territory on the Mekong which she had long been *occupying*, in return for this "sacrifice" by France of those new territories on the Mekong which she was just then *annexing*. This very one-sided bargain was finally embodied in a Protocol signed on July 31st by Lord Dufferin and M. Develle, arranging for the formation of a buffer State which should separate our respective frontiers; its boundaries were to be settled later, after a Survey Commission had provided the necessary geographical data. Still the discussion dragged on until December, when it was pointed out to the French Government that unless the Joint Commission started immediately it could not do so until December, 1894. All possible haste was promised, but the latter date proved after all to be that on which the Commissioners started for the remote scene of their labours.

The principle of a buffer State having been thus conceded, there still remained the exceedingly difficult question of fixing its limits, and determining what territory should be ceded respectively by France and England so as to give it the minimum width of 50 miles. The following rough diagram may serve to fix in the reader's mind the relative positions of

the different countries to be separated by this buffer State or neutral zone:—



A reference to the accompanying map will show that our surrender of Chieng Hung to China necessitates that the northern frontier of the buffer State should be the boundary between Chieng Hung and Chieng Kheng. Its eastern frontier may cause greater difficulty. England has already, on Lord Dufferin's confession, "voluntarily retired nearly 300 miles further west than she need have done, with a view of avoiding umbrage to France by too close an approach to her Indo-Chinese possessions." So that it seems hardly credible that we shall again consent to surrender our rights and retire still further westwards. Presumably, therefore, the eastern boundary of the buffer State will not be further westwards than the eastern frontier of Chieng Kheng, that is to say, the watershed of the Nam U. The western boundary also presents many difficult points for discussion. If the British Government gravely recognise the so-called French "sacrifice" of territorial rights westwards of the Nam U,* no doubt England will be expected to make "sacrifices" in return, and perhaps even to surrender her actual rights of occupation over territory to the west of the Mekong. It is to be hoped, however, that a solution more favourable to British interests may yet be obtained, as suggested in Lord Dufferin's letter of July 31st, which proposed that Eng-

* That these rights were quite fictitious has been already made clear from M. Waddington's statement, which I have quoted above.

land's "sacrifices" should be limited to the *trans-Mekong* (i.e., eastern) portion of Chieng Kheng only; in which case the Mekong itself would be the western frontier of the buffer State. Its southern frontier would then be some line to be agreed upon by England and France which should delimit the territory of Siam; probably the already existing southern frontier of the Chieng Kheng State would answer the purpose.

In some such fashion as this, then, England and France are to avoid becoming actually "limitrophe" on the Indian frontier. What solid grounds exist for the realisation of this hope, or for the expectation of any permanence in such an arrangement, it is hard to see. Already the experts on this question—both English and French—speak of this whole buffer State affair with a smile. The proposed arrangement is in fact an entirely artificial and unnatural one, and I do not myself believe for a moment that anything will come of it. The crucial question of the government of the neutral zone has never been solved. No one has decided what available authority will be sufficient to prevent it from becoming a place of refuge for all the dacoits, escaped criminals, and insurrectionary elements, alike of China, of Burmah, and of Indo-China. A similar No Man's Land between China, and Korea was thus populated, until Li Hung-chang annexed it. It has been gravely suggested that the government of the proposed zone should be handed over to China. One would certainly imagine that France's experience of China as a neighbour in Tongking would lead her to object very decidedly to such an arrangement, as being the most direct means of creating anarchy and disturbance. Moreover, the disorder in the Chinese Empire caused by the present war will assuredly lessen, if that were possible, the already slight hold which the central authorities in Peking with difficulty maintain over these distant Shan tribes; and the existence of a State in a condition of anarchy just between the frontiers of England and France would defeat the precise ends which a buffer State is supposed to subserve.

Even apart from these considerations, it is plain that the English and French Governments are by no means agreed as yet regarding the extent of their respective rights on the Mekong; and when the question comes up for actual settlement, after the Boundary Commissioners have produced the requisite geographical data, it is difficult to see what compromise can be arranged without very considerable concessions, and these made all on one side. The whole question, in fact, is only in its earliest stage; and other difficulties in Indo-China will undoubtedly again become acute before it approaches settlement. The points at issue will be directly between England and France; and as they will finally decide the handicaps in the international race for Yunnan, the question will be one of the gravest importance to our commercial and political interests.

To prove that I have not exaggerated the possibility of these difficulties, it is only necessary to read in the Blue Book the discussions that have already taken place between the English and French Governments on the subject. On October 25th, M. Develle had already begun to "despond about the buffer State negotiations." He very cleverly complained that "by retaining the cis-Mekong part of Kyaing Chaing and assigning the other part to the buffer State we should be remaining on the Mekong ourselves while keeping France away." To this Lord Rosebery very pointedly replied that "as Kyaing Chaing was a State under our suzerainty, we were, in giving up the trans-Mekong part, making a considerable concession, and in retaining the cis-Mekong portion, only retaining what we already possessed." Indeed, matters had almost reached a deadlock so long ago as October 27, 1893, when it became necessary for Lord Rosebery to say very plainly that "should these negotiations unfortunately fail, and should the French Government be unable to accept the above proposal (which is offered in the most conciliatory spirit), the British Government would have to take such measures as they might consider necessary for their own protection. These it is not necessary more particularly to define. . . . They

would also take into immediate consideration the measures necessary to preserve an independent State between the main body of the British dominions and those of France." This determined attitude, however, failed to settle the matter, and it again became necessary to use the same veiled threats, since on November 21st we find Lord Dufferin definitely stating that if the negotiations could not be put through on the lines suggested, "we should be compelled to assert our domination over Kyaing Chaing and on *both* sides of the Mekong in a more active and effective manner than had hitherto been found necessary, for our position in India was such that anything approaching to disputed jurisdiction along our frontier could not be tolerated." In spite, however, of this peremptory tone, M. Develle replied with equal curtness that "the integrity of Luang Prabang was as valid and reasonable a cause of solicitude to France as the integrity of Kyaing Ton was to us: nor would the French Chamber nor French public opinion tolerate its disintegration." The acrimonious discussion was only terminated by a mutual decision to leave for a future date the crucial points of territorial concession on either side—that is, to throw the entire arrangement into the melting-pot. In fact, the whole discussion and the length of time before the buffer State Commissioners could get to work clearly shows that the question will raise innumerable difficulties when the time comes for its final settlement.

There is, moreover, another and a totally distinct frontier question in connection with France and Siam which is likely to develop considerable proportions in the future, and may possibly lead to a radical redistribution of the whole territory of Indo-China—I mean the designs which the French are well known to cherish upon the rich provinces near the great Lake of Cambodia, generally known as Battambang, Angkor, and Siemrap. M. de Lanessan, in his book that I have already quoted, stated these ambitions very distinctly: "From the Se-Moun our empire should cross the Mekong . . . and include the provinces of Battambang and Angkor (pp. 500, 501). . . . Having retaken

the Great Lake Provinces, which formerly were dependent on Cambodia, and the basins of the Mekong and the Se-Moun, we ought to make a point of respecting (!) and, if necessary, protecting, the independence of Siam (p. 470)." It is true that on July 23, 1893, M. Develle gave to Lord Dufferin a definite "assurance that there was no truth in the report that his Government had any intention of taking possession of the Siamese Provinces of Battambang and Angkor." But on April 3, 1889, M. Waddington had said exactly the same thing to Lord Salisbury with regard to Luang Prabang, and this had not prevented M. Develle, in July, 1893, from claiming Luang Prabang, and even declaring that France had always insisted on this right! In fact, so valueless was M. Waddington's undertaking in the eyes of the present French Government that they went so far as to annex Luang Prabang outright, and it is now French territory; and this, too, in the teeth of Lord Dufferin's remonstrances that this proceeding was "incompatible with the previous assurances of the French Foreign Office," and in spite of Lord Rosebery's insistence upon "the limits imposed by previous declarations of the French Government." It is only reasonable to suppose, therefore, since what has been done once may be done again, that the rich Lake Provinces of south-eastern Siam will go the way of Luang Prabang, if France can only again contrive to outwit the British Foreign Office in time, by once more producing an "excited state of public opinion" to support her. Confirmation of this gloomy view is found in the Blue Book (No. 211), where Lord Dufferin speaks of his suspicions that "M. Develle seemed anxious to found a right to a free hand in Battambang and Angkor;" these suspicions having been very naturally aroused in his Lordship's mind by a sinister suggestion contained in the ultimatum of July 20th, that France should farm the revenues of Battambang and Angkor in place of receiving the 3,000,000 frs. of indemnity. So strong were Lord Dufferin's suspicions that he endeavoured to obtain an assurance from M. Develle that the annexation

of these provinces was not intended. His endeavour was a conspicuous failure, for the French Foreign Minister quietly ignored his own statement of July 23rd on this point (above quoted), and maintained that recent Siamese actions had been sufficient to "fully justify France in now taking whatever military or other measures she might deem expedient." However, when Siam finally accepted the ultimatum without reserve, the French colonial party lost their hopes of an immediate pretext for further annexation. But they were too keen to give up their aims lightly; and on July 29th M. Develle had a special interview with Lord Dufferin in order to suggest "some arrangement by which these provinces might be handed over to France in exchange for a portion of the Siamese territory in the north, recently surrendered under the terms of the ultimatum"! This time, however, Lord Dufferin was peremptory, and though M. Develle "deprecated what he evidently considered an unduly harsh remonstrance," said plainly that he "must decline to continue any discussion in the direction indicated, as any transaction of the kind would not only be a serious invasion of Siam, but would equally destroy her independence in view of the proximity of those provinces to Bangkok," and that "the absolute refusal which he then expressed to listen to any such ideas as those which M. Develle had mooted, represented the views of the British Government." Thus England for once had her way and these provinces were saved, for a time at all events, from French annexation. The question, however, came up yet again a few months later, when it became clear that M. le Myre de Vilers' negotiations in Bangkok were aimed at acquiring some special control over these same provinces, so that Lord Rosebery was again obliged to remark very decidedly, on September 7th, that Siam's "rights to the provinces which remain to the west of the Mekong are indisputable, and could not be infringed without serious, perhaps fatal, injury to her integrity and independence;" and he even characterised M. le Myre de Vilers' proposal as "a grave blow at that integrity and independence

of the Siamese Kingdom which the French Government have so often and so specifically promised to respect," the maintenance of which is a "British interest of high importance," as had been "publicly announced in Parliament."

• These peremptory objections of the British Government to further French encroachments on Siam (it seems a pity that Lord Rosebery had not possessed the necessary information to take the same highly desirable attitude four months previously, and so saved many thousands of square miles to Siam) greatly disgusted M. Develle, who "showed a strong desire to postpone entering upon the discussion of the buffer State." But, on September 9th, Lord Dufferin remorselessly reiterated his statement that "Clause No. 5 of the ultimatum seemed to have the appearance of incorporating the provinces of Battambang and Angkor with Cambodia in a kind of *Zollverein*, which would be an arrangement quite incompatible with the maintenance of the independence and integrity of Siam, in respect to which his Excellency had given Her Majesty's Government so many assurances," and on the same day Lord Rosebery made his final pronouncement that "the treatment of the two provinces of Battambang and Angkor as separate and distinct from the other portions of the Siamese Kingdom, seems to us inadmissible." It was not, however, until a week afterwards that M. Develle at last consented to withdraw the obnoxious phrase "reserved zones." But he does not seem to have promised any permanent restriction upon the extent of French control there; and so far as the Blue Book informs us, the matter has been left undecided; while, by the treaty of October 3, 1893, Siam is forbidden to exercise any military control whatever over these provinces, and new and special commercial provisions are to be made throughout them. The condition of things there can thus hardly be considered one of particularly stable equilibrium, since the slightest disturbance might at any moment give the French colonial authorities the coveted chance of stepping in to control the

provinces—a control from which, one may safely prophesy, they would never again emerge.

It must further be remembered that the nearest seaport of these rich provinces is Chantabun, and that France demanded, obtained, and still holds, the military occupation of this port; “pending the complete fulfilment by Siam of her new treaty obligations.” It is true that M. Develle has said that this is merely a temporary measure “with no *arrière-pensée*”; while M. de Vilers stated in Bangkok, on October 2nd, that “the French Government had no intention of retaining possession of that place; that it was their interest to hasten the evacuation on account of the heavy expenditure which it involves.” And M. Develle, on October 3rd, was “good enough” to assure Lord Dufferin that “the French Government earnestly desired to withdraw their troops from that place;” that “they desired no better than to evacuate the place;” and that “*within a month* Chantaboon would be evacuated.” The fact remains, however, that at the present moment—nearly fifteen months later!—Chantabun is still in full military occupation by the French, who have recently landed more troops and heavy guns there, and are keeping hundreds of coolies at work raising the ramparts; and this though it is admitted that the Siamese fulfilled the conditions of the Convention more than a year ago.*

I have thus shown, by a bare narrative of indisputable facts, what has happened with regard to Luang Prabang, what is still happening at Chantabun, and what is approaching day by day within the coveted Lake Provinces. Three more plain facts may perhaps serve to confirm the impression regarding the growing nature of French designs on Siam which the foregoing narrative should not fail to produce. (1) It is not only the irresponsible hot-heads of the French colonial party who

* It was M. Develle himself who stated to Lord Dufferin, on October 3rd, that the only preliminary necessary for this evacuation was that the Siamese troops should be removed twenty-five kilometres west of the Mekong. There is no question as to the complete fulfilment of this clause long ago.

frankly demand the annexation or "protection" of the whole of Siam, but also many of the most serious and learned French writers on colonial policy. Among the latter M. Leroy-Beaulieu is pre-eminent. This is what he says in his latest volume: "Our action ought to embrace the Laos country, and even *the whole of the Kingdom of Siam.*" "We ought to extend our protectorate over the Laos country, and *over Siam*, and become frankly the allies of China."* (2) The French Legation in Bangkok is registering day by day as French subjects crowds of Siamese inhabitants—Laos, Cambodian, and pure Siamese—in fact, all who can be induced to apply, and each of these native French subjects will serve as a peg on which to hang pretexts of French interference as occasion may serve, all along the Mekong valley and the Lake Provinces, under Article VII. of the new treaty. (3) A new Convention has just been extracted from the Siamese, appointing French Commissioners (nominally with Siamese colleagues) to investigate and settle on the spot all disputes arising throughout the territories adjacent to the new frontier; thus creating a veritable *imperium in imperio* of French officials throughout these coveted districts, and affording every possible opportunity for further action.

To complete the materials for forming an adequate opinion of our rights and duties with regard to Siam, in comparison with those of France, the following few but very striking statistics are necessary. The total shipping entered and cleared at the port of Bangkok during 1892 was 410,890 tons. Of this, the British flag covered no less than 356,909 tons, or 87 per cent. How much was French? Rather less than Dutch, or 4,925 tons—a trifle over .01 per cent.! As regards the value of the cargoes carried, the British share of imports was 93 per cent., and of exports 85 per cent. Against this, again, the value of French cargoes was .03 per cent.! It is not surprising, with these figures in view, that France entered with a light heart upon a blockade of the Siamese coast. And the actual amount of

* "De la Colonisation chez les Peuples Modernes," pp. 563, 566.

purely British commerce with Siam is far from inconsiderable. In 1892, the last normal year, the trade of the Straits Settlements alone with Siam amounted to £2,465,822. Territorially, French interests in Siam are no greater than our own, her frontier forming the eastern boundary of the country, and ours the western, while her commercial interests are but a minute fraction of ours. Therefore, whatever rights France has for interference in Siam, British rights are vastly greater. This is—or should be—the key to the whole situation.

The French have twice before tried to found an empire overseas to rival that of Great Britain—once in India, and once in Canada. Indo-China represents their third attempt. My preceding chapters have been written to small effect if they have not made it clear that there is practically no ground whatever to hope that an independent and prosperous Siam will continue to exist under the present *régime*. And if not, then Siam will come under either British or French protection, and the only question is, which shall it be? A short time ago Siam made overtures in the direction of inquiring whether Great Britain would accept her allegiance. The reply was a prompt and blunt negative. It is only fair to add a belief, however, that the Foreign Office has at last grasped the situation and taken a definite resolution with regard to its future policy.

MALAYA.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE POLITICAL POSITION OF THE NATIVE STATES.

CONTINENTAL Malaya is divided, like Gaul of old, into three parts: the Straits Settlements, the Protected Malay States, and the semi-independent Malay States further north. With the first two of these I have already dealt at length in preceding chapters. I come now, as the final division of this book, to the remains of Malayan nationality in Asia—the States of Kelantan, Tringanu, Raman, Patani, and less important ones, all of which lie to the north of the British Protected States and to the south of the Siamese Malay States which occupy the northern portion of the Peninsula. So comparatively unknown is this part of the world that I am unaware of the existence of any map in a European language which shows the division into States of the whole of the Malay Peninsula. In fact, if the student desires to find out the boundaries of the different Siamese States, and their correct names, he will have the greatest difficulty in doing so. The accompanying map, therefore, which I have prepared from many sources, including my own journeys and the official Siamese map drawn to illustrate the King's travels, should be found of service, though as regards the north I cannot claim undoubted accuracy for it. The Malay States have comparatively little interest for the student of Far Eastern politics, as their future is a matter of certainty, and their present condition; so far as administration is concerned, might be described within the limits of a paragraph. I shall therefore confine myself almost entirely to an account of my own

principal journey through the Peninsula, for this part of Malaya makes up in general interest what it lacks in political uncertainty, and few districts of the world's surface offer at the same time so picturesque and so novel a field to the explorer. It is a paradise alike to the sportsman, the naturalist, the collector of weapons and silver, the student of men and manners, and the mere seeker after adventure. Of all my travels and experiences in the Far East my journey across the Malay Peninsula was much the most entertaining. In fact, so far as mere surroundings make happiness, I have never enjoyed so many moments which, like Faust, I would have prolonged indefinitely, as during those months of lonely and far-off wandering in the heart of the unknown tropics.

Before inviting the reader, however, to accompany me into the land of coconut and kris, I must devote a brief chapter to the political position of the native States. This is a matter seldom or never mentioned outside official correspondence, and there but rarely and not always accurately. Yet before long a clear understanding of its main issues will be essential to all Englishmen who study Imperial policy. First, let me stop for a moment to summarise the scanty information that is available about the Siamese States in the extreme north, the unfamiliar names of which are, on the west coast—Renong, Takuapa, Takua-tung, Puket (or Junk Ceylon, a corruption of the Malay name of Ujong Salang), Palian, Satul, and Perlis; on the east coast—Patavi, Chumpaun, Chaiya, the island of Samui, Nakonsitamaj, Patalung, Sengora, Chana, Tepa, Nongchi, Tani, Jaring, Jala, Sai, and Ranga; with Raman, Patani, and Legè. Concerning most of these, as little is known by Europeans as of the remotest parts of Central Africa or Patagonia; and I am unfortunately not able to throw any original light upon them. They represent the long-past conquests of the more militant Siamese of old over the Malay Peninsula. Their population consists of Siamese and of Siamese-speaking Chinamen and Malays. The last named may be described as the backwoodsmen,

since their share of the common work consists of hunting and fishing, and supplying the products of the jungle. The Chinese, as elsewhere in the Peninsula, are the traders, the miners, and the wealthier portion of the community. The head of each State is appointed from Bangkok, and is often a Chinaman. From Penang, with which port all the commerce with the outside world is conducted, a sort of loose connection is kept up between the British authority and the States of the west coast, the Resident Councillor making a yearly visit in a government steamboat for the purpose of exchanging courtesies with the headmen and registering such British subjects as may present themselves. Mr. A. M. Skinner, in his last Report, dated April 30, 1894, is able to give for the first time figures of the aggregate trade between Penang and a number of Siamese and Malay States.* His table, which is therefore of much interest, is as follows:—

	Tin.	Live Stock.	Total
Kedah ...	4,050 ...	89,298 ...	326,075
Perlis ...	— ...	4,096 ...	4,411
Setul ...	— ...	33,308 ...	33,320
Trang ...	51,905 ...	81,419 ...	133,362
Tongkah ...	1,674,303 ...	27,208 ...	1,701,798
Ghirbi ...	— ...	54,128 ...	54,141
Pungah ...	27,319 ...	— ...	27,334
Takuatong ...	— ...	— ...	—
Kopah ...	417,507 ...	— ...	419,082
Benong ...	375,119 ...	— ...	375,159
Totals ...	<u>2,550,903</u> dols.	<u>289,457</u> head.	<u>3,074,682</u> dols.

The export is thus almost entirely tin, against which the chief import is opium, both exclusively with Penang. A considerable revenue flows into the Siamese Royal Treasury from these States, but it is obtained only by extorting everything

* I do not attempt to explain the discrepancies between Mr. Skinner's list and his spelling, and my own. My list is taken from the official Siamese map, and my spelling is a reproduction of the Siamese pronunciation. Not enough information exists for either accuracy or consistency.

possible from the people, and leaving virtually nothing for the development of the province itself. The Siamese expression for provincial authority is significant enough: they call it *kin muong*, literally, "to eat a province." The inhabitants of most of these States, therefore, are in a state of extreme poverty, and they are the helpless victims of misrule. The few of them that are fairly prosperous in spite of Siamese exactions, owe their good fortune to their tin-mines, some of which are beyond all comparison the richest in the world. Concerning the administration of these countries, Mr. Skinner says:—"Everything that we are accustomed to see done by the State in Perak is here rigidly left alone—road-making, sluices, prospecting, mining, and waterway administration." For instance, the road across the Isthmus of Kra to Chumpau, which was begun for the King to cross the Peninsula, remains half-finished, as His Majesty changed his mind or was prevented by the trouble with France, and it will therefore in a short time revert to jungle. Mr. Skinner says that he obtained reliable figures at the Government offices in Puket, showing that some 480,000 dols. out of 560,000 received as revenue in 1893, was remitted to Bangkok; only about 50,000 being expended on the place itself, and not more than 10,000 or 12,000 apart from the cost of the Sikh Police and the revenue-cutter. It is an enormous revenue, he truly adds, to raise in a small island with not more than about 10,000 inhabitants, and if it were all spent on the place itself would soon make it like one of the Protected States. An administrative experiment which, Mr. Skinner says, was looked upon as a measure of reform, has recently been made in all the Siamese States, according to which 10 per cent. only of the revenue is to be taken by the Chief, one-third of the remainder being spent for the benefit of the State itself and two-thirds remitted to Bangkok. But the provincial third cannot be expended without orders from Bangkok, and now remains, and has for many months remained, locked up in the State chest. The purely Malay

States among those I have described as Siamese, are Kedah, Satul, and Perlis, and the river of each of the two latter is silting up, and the places themselves declining. The export of live stock will also show a large decrease when the next figures are made up, since Kedah has recently lost three-quarters of its cattle and buffaloes by rinderpest.

A curious bit of political history is contained in the story of how Kedah came under Siamese control. The story was first told by Mr. John Anderson, Secretary and Malay Translator to the Government of Penang, in 1824. No sooner, however, was his paper issued than it was recalled and suppressed, and the suppression was so stringent that he was compelled to give his word of honour that he had not retained a single copy. The book, therefore, is now of very great rarity. I had the good fortune to come suddenly upon a copy of it in a London second-hand bookseller's, and to procure it for a few shillings.* One copy escaped and was printed in the *Singapore Chronicle* in 1835; by 1854, however, this had become as rare as the original volume, and the paper was therefore reprinted in Vol. viii. of the *Journal of the Eastern Archipelago*, and this, in its turn, is now believed to be so rare that only three or four complete copies could be found. In 1882 it was reprinted, with additions and commentary, by the Straits Government as a confidential document. The reason for the suppression is not far to seek, for Mr. Anderson proved beyond doubt that the East India Company had grossly broken faith with the Raja of Kedah, and he made a strong plea for the protection not only of Kedah but of other States threatened or seized by the Siamese. Moreover, he denounced Siamese action in unmeasured terms, and at that time, as at the present day, the British authorities had for some wholly incomprehensible reason had the greatest objection to hurting Siamese feelings. More than one wrong to

* "Political and Commercial Considerations Relative to The Malayan Peninsula, and the British Settlements in the Straits of Malacca. By John Anderson, Of the Honourable East India Company's Civil Service, Pinang. Prince of Wales Island, Printed under the Authority of Government, By William Cox, 1824."

a British subject has gone unrighted in Bangkok simply because the *mot d'ordre* of the India Office has been not to offend Siam. Mr. Anderson begins by telling how a Siamese fleet of boats appeared in the Kedah River on November 12, 1821, and how, in spite of the gallant defence of a handful of unprepared Malays, their leaders were killed and the people butchered. "The mode of execution," he says, "was horrible in the extreme; the men being tied up for the most trifling offence, and frequently upon mere suspicion, their arms extended with bamboos; when the executioner, with a ponderous instrument, split them right down from the crown of the head, and their mangled carcasses were thrown into the river for the Alligators to devour." The Siamese afterwards attacked Perak and Selangor in the same way, but were beaten off by natives aided by the Company's forces. Kedah, however, was left to its fate. Yet when, in 1785, the Honourable Company had desired the island of Penang, they had concluded with the Raja a treaty in which the following passages occur:—

"Whereas Captain Light, Dewa Rajah, came here and informed me that the Rajah of Bengal ordered him to request Pulo Pinang from me, to make an English Settlement, where the Agents of the Company might reside, for the purpose of trading and building Ships of War, to protect the Island and to cruize at Sea, so that if any enemies of ours from the East or the West should come to attack us, the Company would regard them as enemies also and fight them, and all the expences of such Wars shall be borne by the Company. . . . Should any one in this Country become my enemy, even my own Children, all such shall be considered as enemies also of the Company; the Company shall not alter their engagements of alliance, so long as the heavenly bodies continue to perform their revolutions; and when any enemies attack us from the interior, they also shall be considered as enemies of the Company."

And in the following year the Home Government again approved of Captain Light's promise, and replied that they "were resolved to accept the King of Quedah's offer." In 1791, however, a treaty was concluded without mention of any offensive and defensive alliance; though there can be no doubt whatever that the Raja of Kedah considered that as the Government were in the enjoyment of their share of the original bargain, he was also in the enjoyment of his. The occurrences of 1821

undeceived him. The Honourable East India Company, failed to keep its promise, and Kedah passed under the dominion of Siam.

I spent a very few pleasant days in Kedah, as the guest of the present Sultan; but there is little to say of the country of our former ally. The town of Alostar is a fairly flourishing and well-kept place, patrolled by the Sultan's force of Sikh police under an English officer. The Sultan's private launch came down the river to meet us, his carriage, with two big Australian horses, was at the wharf, and our quarters were charming. His officials were courteous in showing us the sights of the neighbourhood, including the famous limestone caves, and some snipe-shooting which probably could not be equalled in the world. Several times in the course of one morning I had to stand still until the barrels of my gun became cool enough to hold, as a single step would have put up more birds. As we were coming home down the river I shot a crocodile and an iguana. From Kedah a road runs across the peninsula to Sengora, and a concession for a railway has been granted to an Englishman, but up to the present time I believe the necessary capital has not been raised. If the heavy hand of Siam were raised from its administration, Kedah could undoubtedly be made one of the most flourishing States in the Peninsula. Kedah and this district figure thus quaintly in Burton's translation of Camoens:—

“Behold Tavai City, whence begin
Siam dominion, Reign and vast extent;
Tenasserim, Quedá of towns the Queen
That bear the burden of the hot piment.”

Siamese influence in Kedah was thus established by force of arms and in consequence of the failure of the British to keep their engagements. From Perak, as I have said, they were quickly driven back. Over the States of Raman and Patani they also exercise influence, through the Chqwkun of Sengora, a Siamese official. The name Patani, by the way, is frequently used for a very large tract of country in the centre of the Penin-

sula ; as a matter of fact, Patani proper is one of the smallest and least important of the States, and a good deal of confusion arises from this misuse of the name. With regard to Kelantan and Tringanu, however, the two principal States north of Pahang on the east coast, the case is different. The Siamese are endeavouring to exercise here an authority to which they have no right whatever, and it is high time the British Government presented them with an ultimatum on this subject. The position of Tringanu and Kelantan is fixed by two Articles of the Treaty of Bangkok, made in 1826. These are as follows :—

Article X. The English and Siamese mutually agree, that there shall be an unrestricted trade between them in the English countries of Prince of Wales' Island, Malacca and Singapore, and the Siamese countries of Ligor, Medilong, Singora, Patani, Junk-Ceylon, Quedah and other Siamese provinces.

Article XII. Siam shall not go and obstruct or interrupt commerce in the States of Tringano and Calantan. English merchants and subjects shall have trade and intercourse in future with the same facility and freedom as they have heretofore had, and the English shall not go and molest, attack, or disturb those States upon any pretence whatever.

Thus Tringanu and Kelantan are specially omitted from the list of Siamese States, and further, Siam binds herself not to "go and obstruct or interrupt commerce" in them. By the treaty of 1856 these Articles were confirmed. It is therefore clear that Siam has no treaty rights which Great Britain need recognise over these States. They have, however, been in the habit of presenting to Siam every three years the *bunga mas*, or "Gold Flower"—a small tree made of gold-leaf and worth from two to three thousand dollars. It has been the habit of eastern States from time immemorial to present offerings of this kind as a token of friendship with more powerful States, without thereby abdicating their independence in the slightest degree. The Sultans of Tringanu and Kelantan both assured me, as they have often officially assured Governors of the Straits Settlements, that the *bunga mas* was not in any way to be interpreted as an admission of suzerainty, and that their States are absolutely independent of Siam.

This position has been recognised and insisted upon for many

years by the British authorities, one example of which may suffice. Sir Orfeur Cavenagh, Governor of the Straits Settlements, sent an ultimatum to the Sultan of Tringanu in 1862, ordering him to send back to Bangkok the ex-Sultan of Lingga, whose presence was destructive of peace in the Peninsula. As this ultimatum was neglected and the Court of Bangkok exhibited great duplicity, Tringanu was bombarded in 1863. In a letter to the British Consul at Bangkok, dated Singapore, October 8th, 1862, Governor Cavenagh points out that Tringanu is "a Malay State in the Peninsula forming no integral portion of the Siamese dominions." And in another letter, dated December 4th, he writes as follows:—"The States of Trengganu and Kelantan form no part of the territories of the Kingdom of Siam; all correspondence between the British Government and their Rulers has invariably been conducted direct through the Governor of the Straits Settlements." Shortly after this, an unfortunate and inexplicable blunder on the part of the British Foreign Minister and the subsequent Governor of the Straits Settlements threw this question into temporary confusion, to the great advantage of the Siamese. In 1869 the Sultan of Tringanu despatched an Envoy to England with letters and presents to the Queen and to the Prince of Wales. In due course Lord Granville sent to the Governor, Sir Harry Ord, the answers for transmission to the Sultan. To this communication Sir Harry Ord wrote a long reply, in which the following astounding passage occurs:—"With regard to the position of the Sultan of Trengganu, I have never heard it questioned but that he was, like the Raja of Kedah and other rulers of Provinces on the Malayan Peninsula, a tributary of the King of Siam, and that, as such, it was not competent for him to enter into any direct negotiation with a foreign Government." What Sir Harry Ord had "never heard questioned" was, as I have shown, the direct contradiction of the Articles of two treaties and the formally-expressed opinion of his immediate predecessor! He forwarded the replies to Siam, and it is needless to

add that they never reached Tringanu, which thus regarded itself as cast off by the British Government. This ignorant and insensate action on the part of Sir Harry Ord exercised the very worst influence in the Peninsula. It is constantly referred to in conversation among the natives, and the Prime Minister of Kedah quoted it to me as an example of the hopelessness of any attempt to deal with England. It passes comprehension that there was at the Foreign Office nobody with elementary knowledge of the treaties with Siam and the official correspondence between Singapore and Bangkok, to save Lord Granville from this one of his many diplomatic mistakes.

As I have explained in a previous chapter about Siam, the King has recently attempted to strengthen his hold over Kelantan and Tringanu by appointing Commissioners for that part of the Peninsula. This is bitterly resented by both Sultans, and in Tringanu has been successfully resisted. The Sultan of Kelantan has been less fortunate, and whenever the King of Siam was expected he hoisted a Siamese flag, about a foot square. But he persists to this day in declaring his independence, a position to which he is entitled by treaty, and in which he has had the support of at least one recent Governor of Singapore.

I have shaken up these dry bones of history because it is certain, in view of the rapidity with which events are moving in Indo-China, and of the imminent collapse of Siam, that the question of the future of the entire Peninsula will soon come up for settlement. There cannot be, of course, the least uncertainty about the result. No European Power but ourselves has the slightest interest there of any kind whatever. On a recent occasion when the project of digging a canal through the Isthmus of Kra was mentioned by the French to the King of Siam, the British Government promptly declared that such an enterprise was within its sphere of influence, and must not be considered without its consent. The rule of Siam over the inhabitants consists of extortion and nothing else,

and native rule is of a cruel and destructive character. On the other hand, the Peninsula is capable of enormous mineral and agricultural development; and the marvellous progress of the British Protected States, as I have shown in my chapter upon them, furnishes a conclusive proof of what can be accomplished under civilised authority. When the question comes up for decision—and we may hope in the interests of the Malays themselves that this moment will not be long deferred—the entire Peninsula will inevitably become British. Our dominion on land will then extend in an unbroken line from Singapore to Bombay.

CHAPTER XXXII.

A JUNGLE JOURNEY IN UNKNOWN MALAYA.

IN order to learn Malay, which is a very easy language, and to gain experience of the natives, I made a number of short journeys, chiefly for sport, from Singapore as headquarters. Then, when I was fairly independent of an interpreter and had gathered some knowledge of jungle law and lore, armed with letters of introduction in amber silk envelopes, addressed to two Malay Sultans, and a Siamese *thongkra*, or official authority, I left the hospitable little town of Taiping, the capital of Perak, one day in March, for Kuala Kangsar, the old capital. My plans were attractively vague, but my determination was definite. It was to reach the sea on the other side of the Peninsula through Raman and the forbidden State of Kelantan. Only one white man had—or has—accomplished this, Mr. Bozzolo, of whom more shortly, and nobody had ever reached the headwaters of the Kelantan River through the country I proposed to cross. Nor has any one yet repeated my journey.

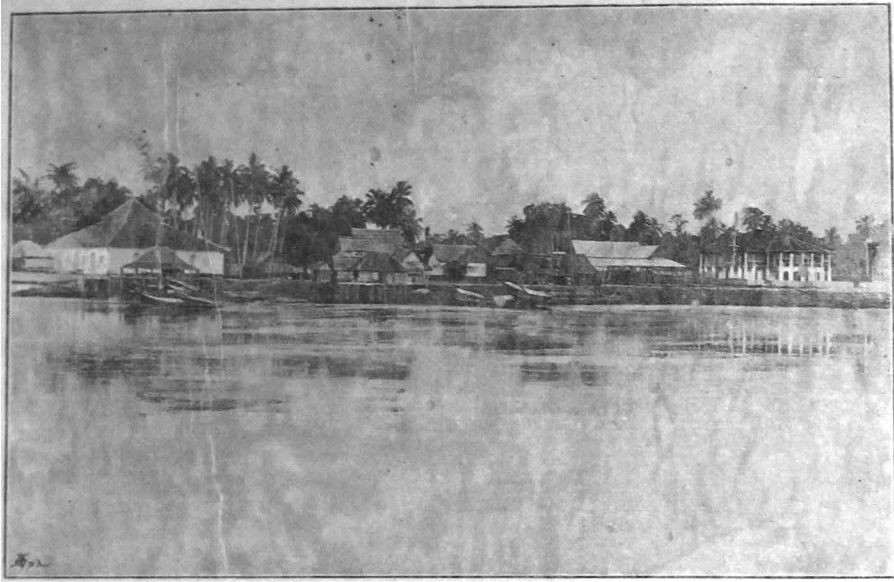
Kelantan is by no means an easy country to penetrate. Many travellers from Singapore have vainly attempted to enter it from the sea and the east coast, and only last summer two Europeans were killed while trying to get in from a neighbouring State, while a well-known mining engineer, Mr. H. M. Becher, lost his life a short time ago while trying to explore some of the unknown parts of the neighbouring State. The Raja of Kelantan was a blood-thirsty and rapacious man, determined at any cost to keep the *orang puteh* out of his dominions, and as will be seen hereafter,

the means he adopted were as savage as they were simple. My own plan was to have recourse to that most efficacious of stimulants, the burning of one's boats. I proposed to travel on elephants until I reached any navigable tributary of the Kelantan River in the district I had determined to visit, and then to send all my elephants back. After this, to go forward would be a necessity, and in order to descend to the sea I took with me during the whole journey across country a dozen boatmen, whose duties would only begin when we reached a river, as I well knew that no boats or boatmen or any other help would be procurable on the borders of the forbidden State. But the traveller is like the child in this respect, that no place woos him so irresistibly as that which he may not enter.

At Kuala Kangsar my elephant-boxes had been made, my stores, weapons and photographic outfit collected, and my native companions were ready. The best of these was my old servant Walab, a "Bombay boy," who had already accompanied me through many of my Far Eastern experiences. Until I brought him to England he was a servant without faults. Strikingly handsome, with an equable temper that nothing could upset, and a sense of humour that anything tickled, honest beyond suspicion, and clever with his hands as a monkey, he was indeed a man-of-all-work. He was a perfect valet, sewed and washed like a Scotswoman, cleaned my guns, loaded my cartridges, skinned my specimens, kept my cameras in order, and broke the heart of every woman of his own rank—white, black, or brown—that he met. His devotion to me on this journey when provisions ran short and dangers threatened was unshaken. Unfortunately, I did him the disservice of bringing him to England, where his stay was short and unfortunate. Among the men engaged specially for this Malay journey were Taik Choon, my Chinese interpreter, a dyspeptic and hypochondriacal but very intelligent young Chinaman whom I had found at Penang; a Malay writer named, of course, Mahmat, who possessed enough of the characteristics of most

English-speaking natives to make me wish afterwards a thousand times that I had left him behind; and two privates of the Perak Sikhs, most kindly lent me by Colonel Walker, their Commandant (I of course finding their pay and clothes, as they did not wear uniform whilst with me), a pair of strapping Pathans named Buta and Menir Khan, both of whom had "passed in Malay." Their names will recur in this narrative, and I may anticipate its close by saying here that two more intelligent, brave and faithful companions no man ever had for a rough journey. Their presence was due to two considerations: first, it was necessary for me to have among my party, which reached nearly fifty natives before it finally got into the jungle, at least two who could be absolutely depended upon to stand by me in case of a mutiny or a fight, since otherwise I should have run the risk of being left to my own resources, if the journey became too laborious or armed opposition were offered. Second, my two boxes of dollars were the special charge of Buta and Menir Khan, one of whom was always to keep them in sight. These were not ordinary "Mexicans," but the once famous Maria Theresa dollar, with the two pillars on the reverse. This, for some unexplained reason, is the only civilised coin that the Malays of the interior will accept, and I had to pay a premium of 9 per cent. for them at Penang. It is not generally known that when we engaged in the Abyssinian War the British Government found itself in similar straits for its money, and finally purchased from the Austrian Government a set of dies for these coins, and struck its own supply.

At Kuala Kangsar the Perak River is a broad and placid stream, and at noon, on March 11th, our boatmen pushed off with their punt-poles and settled down to their long oars. The moment when he really gets afloat, either on sea or river, is always most welcome to the traveller. After the anxiety of preparation, the endless chatter which accompanies the hiring of his men, the lies, the excuses, the things broken or missing, the tongue-wagging of the ubiquitous prophets of evil, the



PEKAN, THE CAPITAL OF PAHANG.



A BELLE OF THE JUNGLE.

reiterations that never can, the stores one has collected be stowed on board, the scramble of the last moment, and the final multitudinous yell of farewell—the sudden change to the peaceful motion of the boat, the pleasant contemplation of everything neatly disposed and the necessaries at hand, the silence broken only by the bubbling at the bow and the dripping from the oar-blade, and above all, the first Lorelei-notes of the unknown and the far-off, luring irresistibly onwards—all this brings comfort and sedate reflection. I considered myself lucky in having forgotten nothing but a spare mosquito-curtain and the zinc buckets, and waited next day while a man went back for them.

As we poled and paddled up the river the cultivation on the banks grew rarer, and the jungle began to come down till it reached the snake-like roots of the mangroves at the water's edge. At night we made fast to the bank, the "boy" cooked a meal, the mosquito-curtain was hung up under the curved roof of the boat, and sleep came quickly at the thought that we were still in British-protected territory, and as safe as if we were moored on the Thames. I spent the second night at Chiga Galla, the third at Kota Tampan, and on the fourth day I reached Tumulung, where two or three of my elephants were waiting for me, and exchanged the river for the road, as I was anxious to get on to Merah, the last outpost of British authority in the Peninsula. So, leaving the boats to pursue their toilsome way against the current and through the rapids to Janning, I packed myself upon an elephant and struck across the jungle path to Kenering, a village at the junction of the Perak River and the Sungei Kenering.* There I slung a hammock in a bamboo house that had been prepared for me, and starting again early next morning, two more elephants having kept an appointment with me there, I found a striking figure waiting for me in the path at midday.

* To understand proper names in Malay geography the following meanings of words should be borne in mind: *Sungei*, river; *Kuala*, the mouth of a river; *Ulu*, the headwaters of a river; *Bukit*, hill; *Gunong*, mountain; *Kampong*, village; *Pulau*, island; *Jeram*, rapids.

Mr. C. F. Bozzolo is a unique character. He was born in Italy, and began his adult life as an engineer on one of M. de Lesseps's dredgers at the digging of the Suez Canal. Then he came to the Far East as an engineer, and I believe it was he who, when instructed to report to an official whether a certain steam-launch would burn wood, replied: "Sir, I have the honour to report that this steam-launch is no more fitted to burn wood than a field-mouse is to wear a paper collar." Sir Hugh Low, discerning his great practical talents, placed him in charge of a government plantation in Perak, where he tried many truly extraordinary agricultural experiments. After he had made many journeys in the interior and acquired a mass of valuable information for the Perak Government, he was promoted to the post of Collector and Magistrate on the boundary of Perak and Raman, where he still exercises a beneficent and powerful sway over the natives. My photograph shows the admirable house he has built for himself there, to which he led me with no little pride, and where I was his guest for several days until the remainder of the elephants I had engaged arrived, and the boats reached Janning, the nearest navigable point on the Perak River. Mr. Bozzolo accompanied me during the first half of my journey, and I was under great obligations to him for his invaluable help. A man, too, who thinks in Italian, writes in an English of his own invention, speaks chiefly in Malay, can transact business in Siamese, and swears in a language with which one is fortunately unfamiliar; who knows every move on the native board, who can cook monkey and peacock to perfection and even produce a tasty *ragoût* of rat; and whose favourite costume is a rosary and a bath-towel, is no dull companion. The character of his administration may be judged from an anecdote or two out of the hundreds that might be told of him. He is a famous collector of Malay weapons, and on one occasion had become possessed of a valuable old kris blade which lacked its ivory handle. Bozzolo discovered a native who could carve him a *perkaka*—or king-

fisher-head—handle, but unfortunately he had no ivory. While reflecting on this misfortune he espied a Perak Government elephant—he has charge of them all—passing through his Compound on its way south. It had a pair of splendid tusks. Instantly, Bozzolo ordered the elephant to be brought back to him. “Is not this a very dangerous elephant?” he inquired of the driver. “No, *Tuan*,” replied the driver, “very kind.” “What!” exclaimed Bozzolo, “do you mean to tell me that you have never known this elephant to be *jehat*?” “Yes,” admitted the man, “sometimes, of course, like all elephants, he is *banyak jehat*—very wicked.” “I knew it,” said Bozzolo; “I cannot permit such a powerful *jehat* elephant to go about with long tusks like this. Bring him down to the river.” The elephant was brought to a sandy bank, made to lie down in shallow water, and in a short time, with the aid of a waxed thread and handfuls of sand, his dangerous tusks were cut off, and Bozzolo’s kris was not long without a handle. One day this energetic officer was standing by his own front gate when two of the natives of his jurisdiction came up, looked at him, and passed without any salutation. Bozzolo called them back; then he sent for one of his police. “These are not men,” he explained to him, “they are dogs; men have always the politeness to recognise me when they pass. Take them to the police station and make them each take out a dog-license.” This was carried out to the letter, and there was no more discourtesy in the neighbourhood of Merah.

After three or four days spent with Bozzolo at Merah, we started for the interior on March 22nd. My little expedition had by this time increased to nearly fifty men and twelve elephants, and a very useful member had been added in the person of a Malay named Ali, who had much experience of such journeys. Every elephant had his own driver and often two, the hire of the men being included in that of the beast; there were over a dozen boatmen, with no duties for the present; a score of camp-men, to build the camp at night

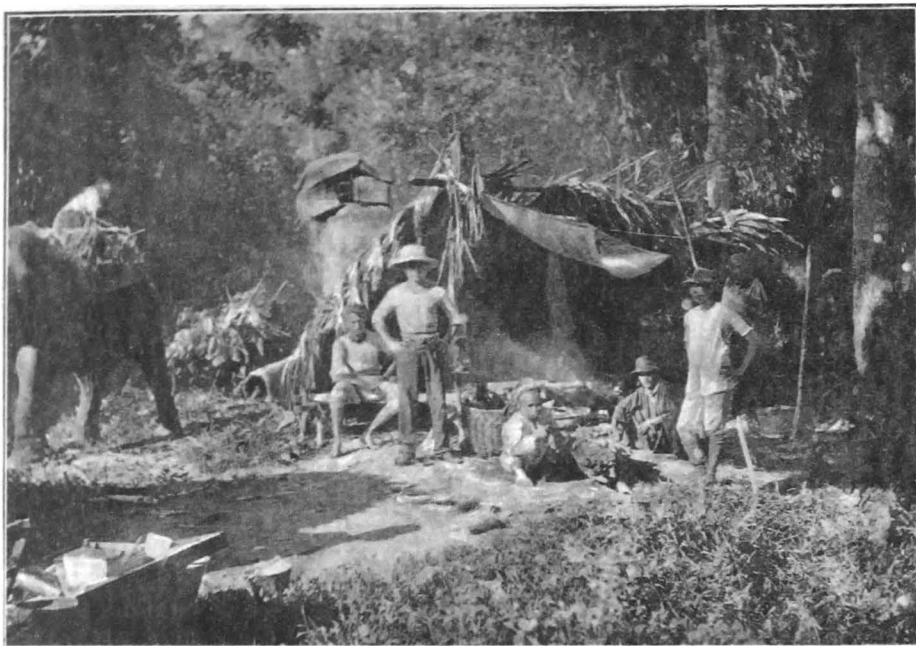
and generally act as the interpreters to us of the strange human, animal, and plant life about us; Walab, Taik Choon, Mahmat, Ali, a Chinese cook—who fell ill a few days out and had to be escorted back—Bozzolo's Malay *Krani* or clerk, and the two Perak Sikhs. As the paths through the jungle, when they exist at all, are barely the width of an elephant's body, and we therefore always proceeded in single file, it will be understood that we made a fairly imposing appearance on our leisurely arrival at any place. Moreover, rumour, which flourishes exceedingly in the interior, representing as it does the newspaper, post-office and telegraph, magnified our strength in the most flattering manner. The first Malay Raja we met asked me, "Where are your soldiers?" "Here they are," I replied, pointing to Buta and Menir Khan. "Oh no," he retorted; "my men told me that they had counted three hundred!"

The building of our camp each night was a very interesting performance. Elephant-travelling is a slow process, fifteen miles a day being good marching, and therefore when the track was passable on foot I was generally ahead of the party in the afternoon. About four o'clock I began to look out for a good camping-ground, in an open space and as far from the actual jungle as possible, that a current of air might drive away the malaria; with water in the neighbourhood; by the banks of a stream for choice; with bamboo-clumps and attap palms at hand, to supply the material of our camp shelters; and not far from a sufficiently thick growth of plants to provide the elephants with fodder during the night. Having found a suitable place I stopped, and as soon as the head of the expedition came in sight the elephants were urged into their best shuffle, the boxes were quickly lifted from their backs and piled in a hollow square, the bags of rice—of which there were a great number, as often none was to be had for many days—were placed upon them; the weapons, ammunition, money and the box of dynamite arranged care-

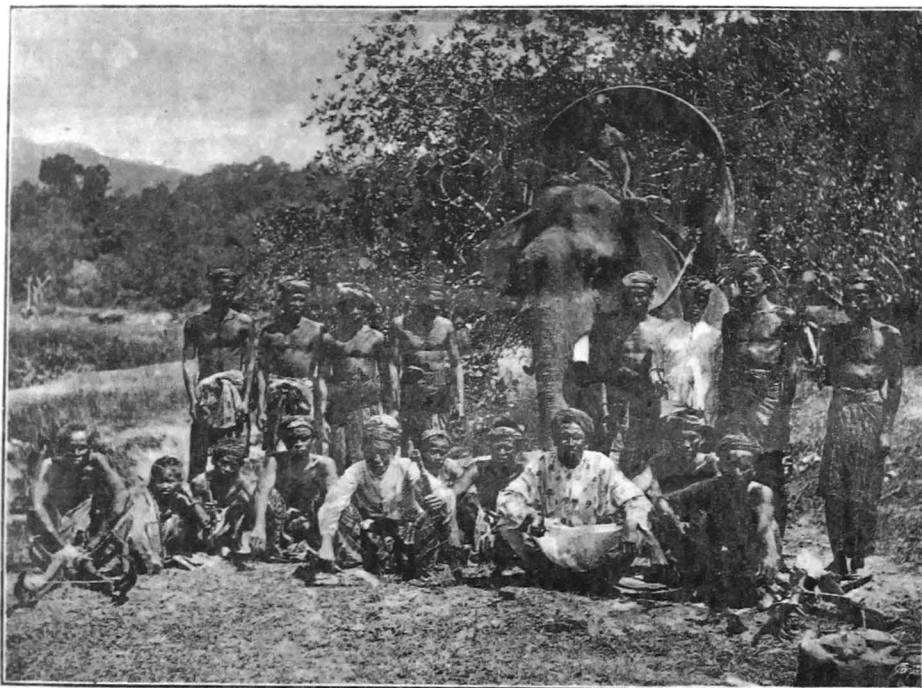
fully in the centre, and waterproof sheets stretched over all. Then Taik Choon presided over the distribution of the day's rations of rice, dried fish and tobacco; the two Sikhs set up our tent, Walab arranged the beds in its interior, and the Chinese cook set to work. This done, I used to take my gun and stroll off to see if anything fresh could be added to the larder, and all the camp-men disappeared in the jungle. I should add, for the benefit of future travellers in Malaya, that the tent was only used two or three times. It was a huge unwieldy thing, often wet through and therefore a heavy and tiresome addition to an elephant's load, and it was neither so good a protection from animals or malaria, nor so warm and dry, as the little places our men built for us. After about half an hour they returned from different directions, bearing each a huge armful of green-stuff or bamboo poles of various sizes, which each man had cut down with his *parang*. They met almost to a minute, and then as if by magic a charming little house sprang up from the ground. First they stuck four poles in the earth and upon these laid a flooring of bamboo about three feet from the ground. Over these appeared a perfectly thatched roof of the long leaves of the attap palm, watertight in anything but a tropical deluge, and soon four similar walls completed the structure. Often in mere exuberance of architectural ambition, these Aladdins of the jungle would build a capital four-legged table into the middle of the floor. My own sleeping-place being thus provided in a sufficiently luxurious fashion, they would erect a similar but less pretentious place for the cook and servants, and another for the elephant-drivers and themselves. It will hardly be believed that this whole process was completed in an hour and a half. The little thatched houses, of which some idea may be obtained from my illustrations, though these mostly show only the rough shelters built for the natives, were beautifully built, the bamboos lashed together in a way the smartest sailor would be puzzled to equal, and the attap thatching woven in a regular and

artistic fashion. The structures are mere "fit-ups," in theatrical language, used for one night only, and then left standing for the next native comer, by whom they are doubtless much appreciated; but anybody following the same road a couple of years afterwards would find them practically as good as new. The only tool used by a Malay for such work is the *parang*, a curved blade like a sickle, set in a straight handle of hard black wood, ornamented, if the possessor is a man of means, with one or more bands of silver. The blade is home-made, of soft iron, with a very sharp thin edge. This naturally is soon blunted, but a bit of sandstone and a bowl of water suffices to put a razor edge on it again in a few minutes. The *parang* is never out of the hand of a Malay, and every traveller soon finds out its uses and makes it his inseparable companion. For many months my own, given me by a Sultan, and decorated with bands and ornaments of virgin gold and hafted in carved ivory, was always in my belt—to lop off branches in front of my elephant, to clear a space from undergrowth, to split and pare a coconut, to sharpen a pencil, to cut up tobacco, to open a tin of meat, to divide the carcass of a goat or a deer, and if necessary to serve as a weapon of offence or defence. It has now come to the "base use" of a wall-decoration. In camp, when the elephants had been turned loose, the meal cooked and eaten, the entries made in the diary, the rice-pots filled and emptied, the needful precautions taken for the night, a plaintive song or two droned out by the Malays, the mosquito-curtain—most important duty for a white man in these latitudes—hung and scrupulously searched, a last tour of inspection made, and a flickering thought flung towards home and those that might possibly be remembering me there, I turned in, and it was not often later than eight o'clock when I wound up my watches, and boiled the thermometer if the camp was at an altitude.

Without elephants these Malayan jungles would be virtually impassable. The great beasts are a mixture of strength and



MY KITCHEN IN THE JUNGLE.



A GROUP IN CAMP.

weakness, of craft and simplicity. Their strength must be seen to be believed. The paths through the jungle from village to village are for the most part merely tracks from which the overhanging and interlacing foliage has been cut and thrust aside, and the virgin soil trodden into a black mud. After a rain this mud is feet deep, and no living creature except an elephant, a buffalo or a rhinoceros could labour through it. For a whole day I have sat on my elephant while he made his way along by lifting one foot at a time, inserting it deep into the slough in front, withdrawing another with a sound like the popping of a huge champagne-cork, all the time his belly being sunk in the mud. To this must be added the obstacles in the shape of great tree-trunks lying across the path. These he would negotiate by rolling over them on his belly, to the imminent danger of dislodging the howdah and its occupant on his back. The worst enemies of the enormous pachyderm are the horse-fly and the mosquito. These insects insert their proboscis through the ducts in the elephant's skin and raise irritating sores. His chief terrors are the smell of wild elephants and fire. One of my narrowest escapes was when I was run away with in consequence of trying to force my mount round a jungle fire, in order not to be hemmed in by it. Nothing but a ride on an earthquake could be compared to the sensation of being run away with by an elephant. Nothing stops his wild rush, and he does not swerve for an obstacle but goes straight at it. A few shakes fling off everything on his back, and the rider has but a second or two in which to make up his mind which overhanging branch he will cling to, or if he will risk throwing himself off. A broken neck would be the certain consequence of remaining. As for stopping him, somebody has well said that you might as well try to stop a runaway locomotive by pulling with your walking-stick on the funnel, as seek to check an elephant at such a moment with the goad. The sounds an elephant makes are ludicrously disproportionate to its size. By stroking an elephant's lip in a

certain manner you can make it purr like a huge grimalkin, till the earth shakes beneath your feet. When it is afraid or angry it squeaks like an unoiled hinge. But when it suddenly jumps aside like a flea, you imagine for a moment that the ultimate terrestrial cataclysm has gone off. The Malays never wholly trust their elephants, and were nervous at my familiarities with mine, a sweet-tempered old female on whom I rode hundreds of miles. During the midday halt I used to call her up and she would come and stand with one foot on each side of my chest as I lay on my back and fed her with bananas. I was never angry with her but once—when she tried to kill the cook. On one occasion a little elephant of our party, running behind its mother, teased her beyond endurance, and she turned and gave him a shove which landed him feet uppermost at the bottom of a deep brook. For two hours he screamed like a steam whistle while we were all engaged in getting him out. Malay elephants have a language of their own which their drivers talk to them, and which is very easy to pick up. For instance, *Hee* means "Quick;" *Haw*, "Stop;" *Moo*, "Go to the right;" *Klung*, "Go to the left;" *Tehoh*, "Go backwards;" *Terhum*, "Kneel down;" *Peha*, "Don't rub against the tree;" *Peha moo*, "Don't rub against the tree on your right;" *Peha klung*, "Don't rub against the tree on your left;" and so on. An elephant obeys this language just as a human being would do. Every night when we reached camp and the loads were taken off, each driver would hobble his beast by tying its front legs together with rattan, so that it could only hop with both together. Then a huge wooden bell was hung round its neck and it was turned loose to wander in the jungle. All night long the faint *dong, dong* of these bells made a mournful noise round the camp. At daybreak each driver tracked his elephant by the sound, often going many miles for him. The elephant is in some respects a stupid beast, and many of the tales of its sagacity are apocryphal, yet it sometimes does very strangely intelligent things. Once a tiny elephant got jammed in between the

portions of a heavy tree-trunk which had been cut in two to leave a passage on the road. Its screams brought back its mother from ahead. She inspected it carefully for a moment, then walked a dozen steps backwards and lowering her head charged straight at it, shooting it out as if it had been fired from a gun. Now, she must have seen that although the little one could not move either way, there was really room for it to get through. If there had not been, her charge would have squashed it as flat as a pancake. The elephant's amusement is to filch a bunch of succulent stuff from a garden as he passes, mud is his cosmetic, the rapid is his footbath, and little he reckons of the attraction of gravitation. I parted from mine almost in tears.

It is commonly said in the East that the Malays are a wilful and treacherous race, with whom one is never quite safe, and whose devotion and loyalty can never be wholly relied upon. At the door of a restaurant in Singapore stands or squats all that remains of a man who has been horribly mutilated, bearing on his breast a label which says, "The Victim of Malay Piracy," and the feelings he invokes in the passer are those which prompt the usual verdict upon the Malay race. On the principle of speaking well of the bridge which has borne you, my own report must be different. The Malay, when unspoiled by intercourse with foreigners or his own countrymen who have lived at a foreign settlement, is one of nature's gentlemen. He is a hunter, a fisherman, a backwoodsman, by choice. Prolonged, monotonous hard work is so repugnant to him that he would rather starve than undergo it. No inducement, for instance, will make a miner of him. Hence in such matters he is easily pushed to the wall by the ready and unscrupulous Chinaman. Sometimes this pride or laziness is very irritating. You want to get something done, and you find a Malay who could do it reclining at ease beneath his coconut-palm, with his wife or wives seated respectfully behind him. You say to him, "Will you do so-and-so for me?" He replies, "No,

Tuan, it is too hot." You say, "But I will give you five dollars." "It is much," he says, "but I am tired, and it is pleasant in the cool shade, and it would be very difficult to do what you wish." And no argument moves him, though the money you promise would be a small fortune. Offer him the loan of a rifle, however, to go and shoot something for you, and he will gladly do it for nothing. And once secure his friendship, and treat him as a friend, and, so far as my experience enables me to judge, he will stand by you to the death. The secret is that he comes of a very proud race, which has not lost its pride though circumstances have reduced it to a low rank among peoples. Respect his pride, and he is your friend; offend it, and he is your enemy. My man Ali and the Penghulu Bujoh—of whom more hereafter—were as plucky and faithful when the pinch came as men could be. All good be with them!—except for their loyalty my bones would probably be shining at night in some Kelantan jungle, and my fate a myth among my fellow-countrymen. The Malays, like all eastern races, are extremely particular about the treatment of their women by strangers. I gave stringent orders that interference with the women of the places through which we passed would be severely punished by me. When it occurred, I fell upon the offender with the utmost severity. On one occasion I publicly thrashed an elephant-driver with the handle of his own goad to an extent that threw a gloom over my party for several days. This sort of thing was mightily resented by the victim at the time, but public opinion turned afterwards in my favour, and to this attitude I attribute much of my freedom from opposition and enmity. In this matter every white traveller lies under a heavy responsibility toward those who may follow him. In a native village I was once met by a number of hostile inhabitants who barred the way and would not even allow me to buy provisions there. I learned afterwards that this was owing to the misconduct of a white man who had visited the place before. If he were to show himself there again he would be kissered at sight.

The jungle is a world of i'tself. Twenty feet back from the track and—

“Lo! the half-finished world! Yon footfall retreating,—
It might be the Maker disturbed at His task.”

No human foot has ever pressed it: no interference of man has modified the conditions of primal life. All the strange green things that the rich warm earth produces and the tropical sun and rain nurse into exuberance are engaged in a desperate struggle for existence. So tight are they gripped together that it would take you an hour, *parang* in hand, to hew your way through them for a few yards. As Stevenson's last poem says—

“I saw the wood for what it was—
The lost and the victorious cause;
The deadly battle pitched in line,
Saw silent weapons cross and shine;
Silent defeat, silent assault—
A battle and a burial vault.”

Above all towers and waves the bamboo—most graceful thing that grows; the unbreakable rattan, often hundreds of yards long, knots all the rest tight in its coils; and every now and then you are dazzled by a blaze of marvellous orchids, smothering some doomed tree—a fortune, if only you could take them home. There is little animal life in the jungle except an occasional snake and infinite myriads of insects. One morning as I rose from my bed a boa-constrictor rose with me and crawled away, no doubt well satisfied with his night's lodging. His skin, fifteen feet long, came home with me. Words fail me, not being an entomologist, to describe the insects. Conceive the most extraordinary shape you can, imagine it glaring with all the primary colours, and posing like the contortionist of a circus, and you would not have to go far in the jungle to see it realised *in petto*. Upon a pool in the path will be a thousand butterflies, blue and yellow and scarlet and purple and orange—every colour in nature's wanton palette. And

the moment you show a light at night, in comes the mantis, that creature whose hands are apparently clasped in prayer, but whose heart is filled with bloodthirstiness. This is the insect that St. Francis Xavier, misled by its devout attitude, requested to sing the praises of God, "which it immediately did in a very beautiful canticle." In all countries its raised thorax and extended raptorial legs have given it an undeserved reputation for sanctity, and hence people even in Southern Europe believe that its motions foretell coming events. The Malay has many quaint and Rabelaisian games with it, and believes, half in earnest, that by questioning it and then giving it a shake, he can learn whether his absent wife is faithful to him. Such are some of the aspects and inhabitants of the jungle. But the chief impression left on the mind of any one who penetrates it must be that of its marvellous nearness to the days of creation.

"It is man in his garden, scarce awakened as yet
From the sleep that fell on him when woman was made.
The new-finished garden is plastic and wet
From the hand that has fashioned its unpeopled shade."

It is unnecessary in this place, and would be wearisome to the reader, to narrate in detail my journey across the Peninsula. I will only describe a few of the incidents which distinguished one day from another, and sketch my route in outline.* The rest would be more appropriately told in a technical journal. The second night out from Merah, we camped at Ayer Naksa, at a small clearing deep in the jungle. An hour after leaving this

* My exact route—which, though it is roughly indicated upon the map in this volume, cannot be traced in detail upon any map except that which I prepared as I advanced—was as follows: Taiping, Kuala Kangsar, Chiga Galla, Kotah Tampan, Tumulung, Kuala Kineri, Janning (Merah), Kampong Laving, Bukit Naksa, Kampong Grik, Kampong Kronei, Bunga Rendang, Merchang, Jarom, Ayer Bah, Den Propoh, Batu Kapor, Kampong Joh, Goakapor, Tana Puteh, Kala, Beluka, Laloh, Blentang, Tanjong Mas, Kampong Bukit, Kampong Plung, Kampong Segah, Kampong Chumei, Batu Mernang, Kuala Leh, Temoh, Pacho, and Kampong Stah, where I built my rafts for the river journey, as described in the next chapter. Each of the above places was where I camped, and I remained at some of them, of course, for several days.



IN THE JUNGLE : AN EARLY START.

place next morning, we crossed the boundary into what is known as the "disputed territory." This is marked by a line cut through the jungle, and the trees blazed on the side of the watershed. Historically and geographically, a considerable stretch of territory north of this belongs to Perak, but the Siamese claim it as part of the State of Raman. It was the subject of prolonged negotiations between the British and Siamese Governments a few years ago, and the dispute was at last finally settled, and Prince Devawongse, who had come to England for the purpose, went to the Foreign Office to sign the Convention. At the very last moment, when the documents were spread upon the table and the pen dipped in the ink, he refused to sign, and the settlement fell through. This is the incident to which I have alluded in my previous account of the Siamese Foreign Minister. The matter is one of considerable importance, since some of the most valuable mineral territory in the Peninsula is situated just beyond the present improper boundary, and nothing would be simpler than for the Straits Government to settle the question by a determined attitude at the present time. At Kampong Grik, a curious little nocturnal adventure befel me. I had gone to bed in my tent, but was lying awake smoking, when I heard faint footsteps outside, and through the canvas, within a couple of feet of my head, came the purring and snuffling of a prowling tiger. I could distinctly hear his breathing and the scratch of his claws as he felt the strange obstacle in front of him. A loaded rifle lay by my side, and directly in front of my feet was the small half-open tent door. I raised the rifle and kept it pointed at the opening, and a few moments later the dark mass of his body closed it. I determined not to fire unless he should try to come in, as the chance of my killing him was slight and the chance of his killing me was excellent. So I lay motionless, in a state of mind which may be colloquially described as funk, until to my immense relief he took himself off. At Kronei came the first example of the effect of native rule. A miserable and dirty old

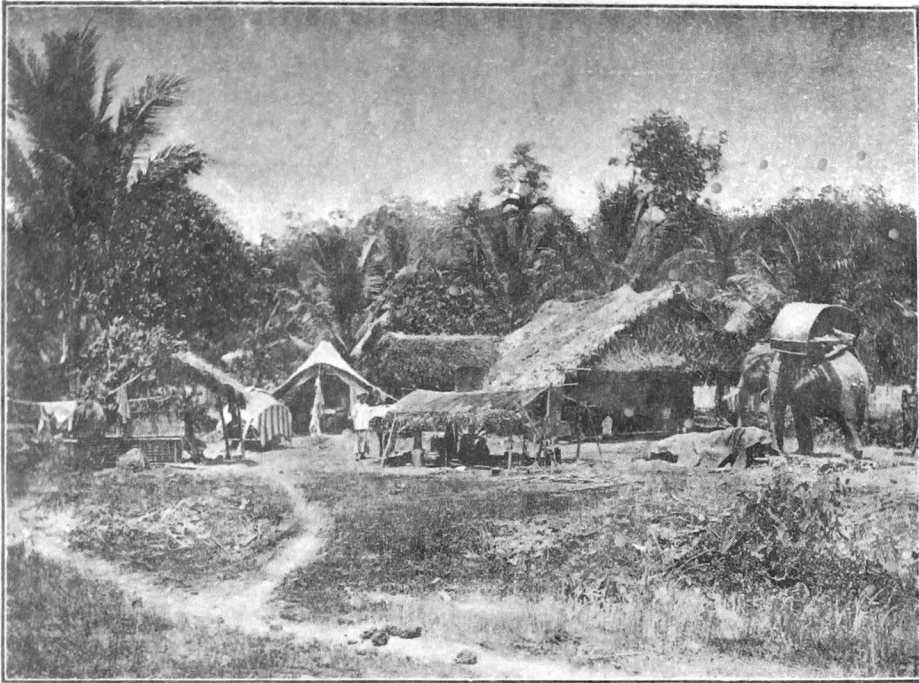
woman came to the camp to exchange a *sarong*—the woven silk garment which Malays of both sexes wear as a sort of petticoat—for food. I found that she was no less a personage than a sister of the Raja of Raman, and had formerly been wealthy from the taxes upon agriculture and tin-mining in the district over which she presided. Now, however, nearly all her people had migrated into Perak and the whole place was virtually abandoned; yet the tin-mines at Klian Intan are probably among the richest in the Peninsula. The next night was spent in the thick of the jungle, and on the following morning we crossed the watershed at Raman, at a spot where there are the remains of an old Perak fort. This is the boundary between Perak and Raman, as properly claimed by the Perak Government. Before reaching Merchang, I chanced upon a strange thing for the East, namely, a real game-preserve—a large stretch of forest, surrounded by a rough boundary, kept up by the Rajah of Raman for his own sport, severe penalties being visited upon any Malay who hunts in it. For the greater part of a morning I walked by a charming winding path through this, and on all sides there was evidence of the possibilities of excellent shooting. A few hours beyond Merchang is a place called Bitung, one of the seats of the Raja and a once prosperous village, now also deserted, all its inhabitants having moved over to Kedah to escape his exactions. At Jarom we camped inside a stockaded village, and I remember well shooting three wild peacock there. The wild bird is far more gorgeous than the tame one familiar to us, and when one of these, flying overhead, is stopped by a charge of heavy shot, and comes tumbling down with the sun shining on his outstretched wings and tail, it seems for a moment as though one had accidentally blown the end off a rainbow. The breast of a peacock, carefully cooked, is very good eating, but the Malays will not touch it, as, for peculiar reasons, they consider it an unclean bird. At Den Propoh, one of the oldest settlements, after which is named a pass we crossed at an altitude of 1,200 feet, there is an interesting tradition to the

effect that the place is haunted by the spirit of Toh Propoh, a former emigrant chief, supposed to have sprung from Gunong Angors, an extinct volcano. The Raja of Raman has a fine house here, in one of the rooms of which I was amused to see an old-fashioned foreign bedstead. Just before reaching Kampong Joh, we came to a village so recently deserted that the pigeons belonging to the inhabitants were still flying about it. I walked through all the empty houses to satisfy myself that nobody was left, and then I shot enough of the pigeons to provide us with a welcome meal all round. At Goakapor the headman gave us a very friendly welcome, and presented me with a fine young bull from his herd of buffaloes on the condition that I shot it with my elephant-rifle, which had aroused his keen curiosity. The herd was driven up, the bull picked out, and just before putting the rifle to my shoulder I looked round for the raja, as he called himself. His courage had failed at the last moment and he had fled. As soon as the bull fell, Buta ran up and slit its throat in Mohammedan fashion; and the feast which followed necessitated a halt of a couple of days, since almost every native member of the expedition was ill from over-eating, and the amount of pills and salts I had to disburse made a severe drain upon the medicine-chest.

The most welcome occasions to my men were when I promised to "shoot fish." Many of the rivers we passed were full of fish, and of course there is nobody to catch them. Rod and line, or nets, would be far too slow, and it was for this purpose that I had brought with me a box of dynamite. A likely spot having been chosen, I would take a couple of cakes of the explosive, imbed a detonator in them, attach a piece of fuse, and tie them to a heavy stone. Then, keeping all the natives at a distance, I would light the fuse and toss the stone into the deepest part of the river. Half a minute later there was a dull reverberation, the water heaved, and a cloud of smoke escaped. The men, stripped almost to the skin, would run up and stand in a row on the bank. In a short time a fish would be seen, belly

upwards, followed immediately by a score or a couple of hundred if the shot were a lucky one. With a shout of delight everybody would plunge in, and for five minutes there would be a scene of wild excitement and delight. The rice-pots would be full that night, and every man would have enough dried fish to last him for a day or two. In the native States it is of course forbidden to kill fish in this wholesale manner, but there was no harm in doing so in a district where the fish would otherwise have gone uncaught; and indeed without this expedient I should often have been at a loss to feed the expedition. As it was, provisions once or twice ran unpleasantly short: I was surprised, by the way, to find that in these far-inland rivers there were still crocodiles. The natives denied the fact, and would plunge in and wade about without the slightest fear; but I had on one occasion striking proof of the existence of the reptiles. One day we had crossed no fewer than nine rivers, sometimes wading up to our arm-pits, and in several cases the current was so swift that ropes had to be attached to the elephants for the men to cling to while crossing. Toward nightfall we came to a river too deep to ford, and a *détour* of several miles was necessary to reach a good camping-ground just on the other side. I called up a native of the locality and asked him, "*Adah boya disini?*" "*Tidah!*" was his instant reply, so I plunged in and swam across. Just as I was scrambling up the bank, I heard a shout from the men watching me, and a large crocodile came sliding down and splashed into the water within a few feet of me. After that I gave up swimming Malay rivers.

When we reached a place called Tana Putih — literally, "White Earth" — Bozzolo and I left the camp for a couple of days, and on our swiftest elephant made a tour of a delightful agricultural district in that neighbourhood lying round a village called Kampong Topaya. Nowhere in the East have I seen a more attractive district for growing paddy. Crossing a mountain range coming back, we lost our way, and finding a well-kept path leading upwards, we followed it to the top of a high hill



MY CAMP AT KUALA LEH.

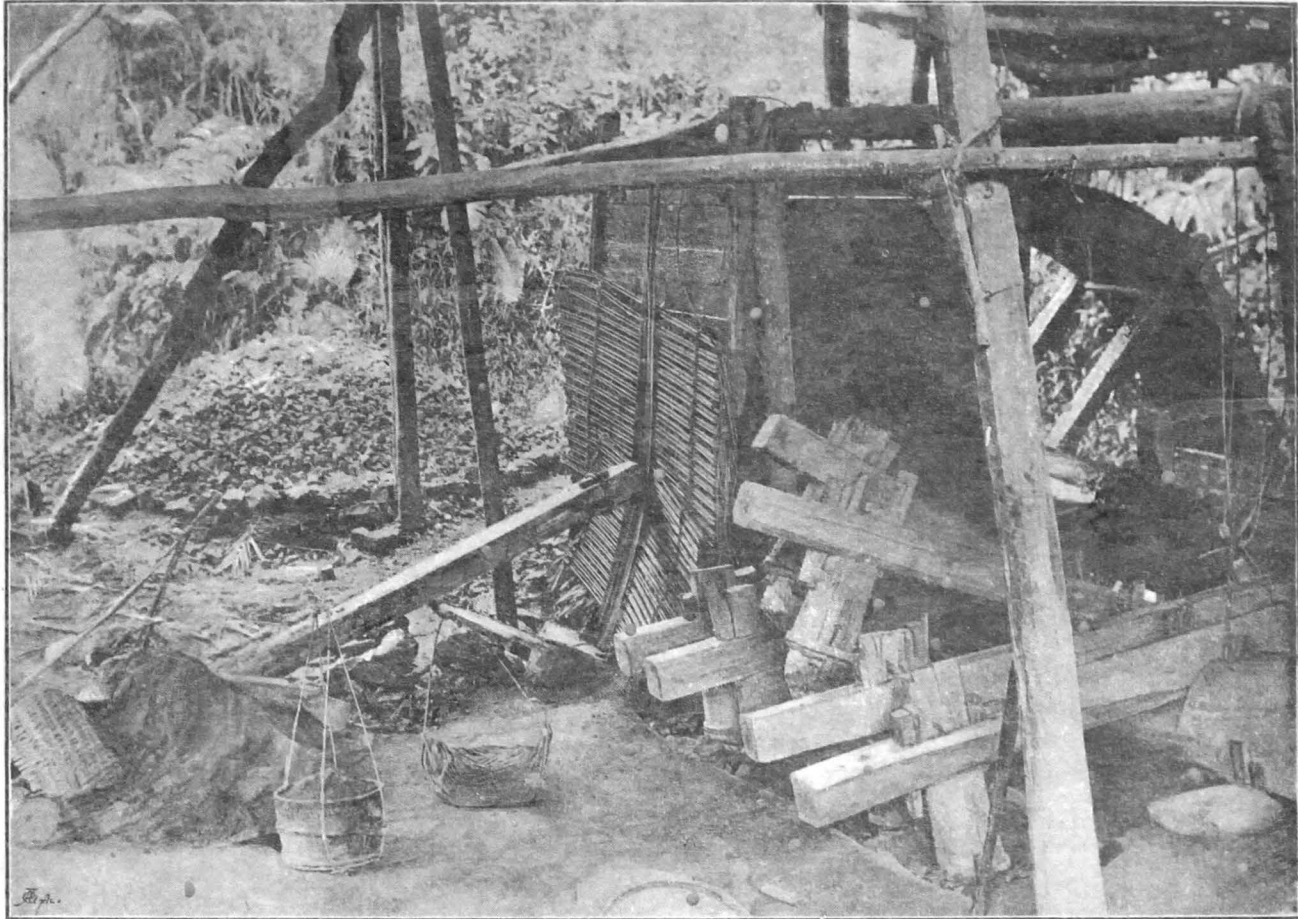


THE LAST BRITISH OUTPOST, PERAK.

called Bukit Jerei. This turned out to be a thrilling spot. At its summit we found ourselves on the edge of a sheer precipice, five or six hundred feet below which we could see the tops of the trees of a thick jungle. This place, we learned, is literally the Hill of Death. From the place where we were standing, condemned criminals and lunatics are hurled off into the forest below. The day before our visit, one unfortunate idiot who had become a nuisance in one of the Raja's villages, had been led up and thrown over. The hill has been used for this purpose from time immemorial, and one's imagination falters at the thought of the spectacle that would be presented below. For a few minutes we conceived the idea of exploring that ghastly jungle, where no Malay would dream of setting foot; but time was short, and we came to the conclusion that it would be rather too horrible. At Beluka a native vendetta had been raging, and a man came to me in camp to have his arm dressed. He had been shot at close quarters in a night attack ten days before, and a rough spherical bullet had passed clean through his right fore-arm, shattering the bone and leaving a dreadful hole which had already begun to mortify. The natives believe, of course, that a white man's medicine will cure anything, but this was beyond my surgery. He was a plucky patient, and I removed all the gangrened flesh and filled the hole with a plug of lint soaked in the strongest carbolic oil he could bear. But I fear that such rough treatment did not save him.

Tanjong Mas is the capital of the State of Legé. It is on the River Benara, up which boats of several tons burden come with difficulty from the coast, which is not far away. The surrounding district is a beautiful meadow country, fit for any cultivation. In front of the Sultan's residence, which is defended by a great fence of four-inch planks, set endwise in the ground, is a large racecourse. The Malays of this State have a bad character, but we were hospitably received and assigned quarters in the house of one of the officials. In the shops I bought some beautiful *sarongs*, and the best kris I saw in the Peninsula, with

a handle made of *suassa*, an alloy of gold and some other metal. The Sultan himself we could not see, as he was very ill, it was believed from the effects of poison, and great excitement was prevailing concerning his successor. Two candidates had already started for Sengora, with elephants loaded with dollars and presents to propitiate the Siamese Chowkun there. Soon after we left Tanjong Mas, a tropical rainstorm burst upon us, and all day long we journeyed under a terrific downpour. I was the first to reach a miserable village called Kampong Bukit, and took the nearest accommodation offered to me—one room in a crowded Malay house—as it was far too wet and dark to think of putting up a tent or building the customary shelter. For two hours I sat and shivered, until at nine o'clock the rest of the elephants began to arrive. The whole expedition was in a state of complete demoralisation, so, stripping to the skin and wrapping a towel round my waist, I went out into the pitch darkness, and under the hot deluge tried to bring some kind of order into the camp. At midnight, completely worn out, I returned to the room and flung myself down on the floor. At daybreak I woke, and saw in a moment the mistake I had made. It would have been better for me had I spent the whole night wandering in the jungle, for through the cracks in the bamboo floor I perceived below me a mass of horrible and reeking filth, in which several buffaloes were wallowing, and which was clearly the *cloaca maxima* of the whole family of men and beasts. I took as much quinine as I dared, but the consequences soon developed themselves. Next day I began to feel ill, and had recourse to chloredyne. The day afterwards I was suffering from an unmistakable attack of dysentery. Now, in the Far East people commonly die of dysentery, even in hospitals and with skilful medical attendance. In my case, hundreds of miles from such assistance, and with nothing but a bottle of ipecacuanha—the most difficult drug in the world to administer persistently to one's self—and with no shelter but a palm-leaf hut in a steaming jungle, I could hardly expect to fare better. After a quarter of



NATIVE MILL FOR CRUSHING GOLD-QUARTZ, TEMOH.

an hour's mental revolt, I frankly resigned myself to the worst, and prepared to spend what I regarded as my last day or two in living over again in memory the happiest days, and communing with the dearest friends, of the past.

“ Oh! little did my mother think,
The day she cradled me,
The lands that I should travel in,
The death that I should see.”

My camp-men surpassed themselves in building me a little house in an open space a mile or two further on, by the side of a pleasant stream; and for several days I flickered between life and death, while Buta and Menir Khan and Ali scoured the country for milk, each carrying an empty bottle into which he milked indiscriminately every goat, buffalo, or other female animal he could find. At last, however, I seemed to be turning the corner, and then a strange thing happened. One morning, word was brought to me that a species of medicine-man, half-Siamese, half-Malay, wished to know if he might see me. I thought his visit would at any rate be entertaining, and ordered him to be brought. He explained to me—speaking a Malay of which I could not understand half—that he was able to cure such sickness without medicine, by means of his own. I consented to an attempt, and after various kinds of incantation he proceeded to rub my back with a curious stone he carried, and with a ring on which was chiselled the figure of a snake. My recovery he naturally attributed to his own powers, we became good friends, and many strange things he told me. When I was leaving, I pressed upon him a few presents, and as I was sitting on my elephant he put up his hand to bid me farewell, and when I stretched mine down towards him he slipped upon my finger his serpent ring. I may be charged with superstition, but I still set great store by that ring.

For days after this I travelled propped up on my elephant, passing the time with a book of chess problems and a little travelling chess-board. I cannot too strongly recommend this

method to other travellers on monotonous journeys, for often the simplest problem will render one oblivious to the *ennui* of a whole day. For some time at this point, my diary contains nothing but the word, "sick." Three days later we reached Kpala Leh, just beyond which rise the "gold-hills of Temoh," the centre of the chief gold-mines of the native States. Here the land part of my journey virtually ended.

The district of Temoh belongs to none of the States which it adjoins, but is a small tract of independent territory held direct from the King of Siam. Its headman is a half-bred Chinaman, who pays a small yearly tribute for the authority which he exercises in a despotic manner over the little mining community. This numbers about three hundred Chinese and a hundred Malay inhabitants. The district is a triangular-shaped valley, about five miles long and four miles at its widest end. The hills which shut it in rise to a height of 3,000 feet, Temoh village, half-way along the triangle, being about 680 feet above the sea. It has been worked for its gold for certainly half-a-century, and many Chinamen have made their small fortunes there and returned to China. The gold-mining consisted at first of alluvial washing in the crudest manner, and this gradually led the miners further up the valley until they came to the reefs. There are still a number of huge pits where washing goes on, and the spoil-heaps left probably cover hundreds of acres. At the time of my visit there were no fewer than twenty-eight shafts driven upon the various reefs. Most of these I entered, and in several—although I have not the qualifications to offer any technical opinion upon their value—with my own hands I removed pieces of quartz showing visible gold. A Malay told me one day that at the bottom of the little river, which was about five feet deep, the soil was auriferous, and to prove it he took one of my cooking-pans, waded into the middle of the river; drew a deep breath, plunged below the surface, and reappeared with the pan full of earth. Sure enough, when this was washed, four or five grains of bright gold remained at the bottom of the pan. The Chinese

miners work in societies, or *kongsis*, which divide the proceeds amongst their members, down to the mere coolies, each man taking a share proportioned to the amount of his expenditure in the venture. All of them pay a heavy tax to the Chinese headman, who thus recoups himself for the bribe he no doubt paid to Siamese officials for his appointment. As the Chinese miners have hardly any iron tools, no explosives and no modern machinery of any kind, their treatment of the quartz is naturally very primitive and extravagant. They break it up originally by driving in wooden wedges and wetting them; the boulders are then carried in baskets on men's backs to the mills to be crushed, and the product undergoes a rough process of washing in troughs. These mills, of which my illustration shows the principal one, are constructed exactly on the lines of the ordinary Chinese rice-mill, the stamps being a series of trip-hammers, operated by an overshot water-wheel. A large amount of gold must have been taken from Temoh, and a good deal was offered me for sale, both in the shape of dust and nuggets; while the strange jewellery made by one family in Temoh village, and stained a deep red by being boiled in saffron and some alkali, is unique in its curious semi-savage beauty. I may add that a concession for part of this district was granted by the King of Siam a few years ago, and an attempt made by a London syndicate to work it, but unsuccessfully.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

ON A RAFT THROUGH A FORBIDDEN STATE.

FROM Kuala Leh to a considerable distance down the Kelantan River I was in the unknown country. Mr. Bozzolo is the only European who has been in this district before, and he proceeded by a different route and entered the Kelantan River at a higher point than I intended to strike, leaving all this intermediate country unvisited. It is very easy to tell when you are the first white man in any place. From all round, beginning with daybreak and ending with nightfall, a steady stream of natives, men, women, and children, poured by. Most of them brought at first small presents—a dish of rice, a couple of fowls, a bit of metal-work, a bunch of bananas, which they offered me very humbly, with many protestations of friendship. These accepted, they would solemnly sit for hours, intently watching everything we did, and only uttering from time to time ejaculations of surprise as each new foreign marvel caught their eye. By and by they discovered that I was civilised enough to recognise the Malay custom which dictates that a present from an inferior to a superior must be met with a present of greater value, and then their “gifts” came pouring in with embarrassing lavishness. When I had returned a dollar a dozen times for a small supply of provisions I did not need, and smaller sums for smaller presents, the process naturally began to pall, and to their great disappointment I declined to receive further tokens of their good-will. To the children, however, I continued to distribute the tiny silver coins

I had brought for the purpose, with the result that my appearance must have been that of a Pied Piper of Hamelin, for whenever I took a dozen steps in any direction I was followed by a horde of nearly naked, little people, their natural fears of the *orang puteh* struggling with their excitement and their hopes. I was anxious to keep on conspicuously good terms with the people hereabout, for the effect it would produce upon my own men, whose courage had been ebbing visibly ever since we had at last turned our faces finally in the direction of the dreaded Kelantan. The nearer this came, and the more clear it was that I was actually going on, the less energetic they were, and the greater their tendency to find a lion in the simplest path. Their desertion at this moment would have put a stop to my progress and compelled me to return ignominiously by the route I had already taken. Therefore I resorted to every possible expedient to keep up their spirits and promote harmonious relations with the inhabitants.

Before leaving Kuala Leh there were elaborate good-byes to be said, and many wishes for another meeting, which seemed to be sincere on the part of my new-made acquaintances. With old Captain Labet, the headman of the Chinese there, these were of a cordial and almost affecting character. I gave him the remaining dynamite and stock of detonators, a pistol, a number of small European objects, and in return he presented me with his most precious possession. This was a long sword, with a scabbard of bright red wood, a silver-mounted hilt, and a very thin blade, so sharp that it was difficult to feel the edge of it without cutting oneself. Its sharpness was not mere "edge" like a razor, but thinness of metal, with the same kind of edge as the blade of hard grass which cuts you almost without your knowledge. This sword was of such value in his eyes because it was *betua*—fortunate, of good omen—the most valuable attribute that a weapon can possess in the eyes of a Malay. The blade of this antique object is so thin that a vigorous thrust would inevitably snap

it off short. The workmanship of it is a complete puzzle to me. It is in some respects too well made to be of native workmanship, yet it does not look like a foreign weapon. Probably it is originally a combination of the two, a Malay workman having employed parts of a foreign weapon of some sort in manufacturing it. Whatever the real worth of its occult properties may be, it is certain that Captain Labet placed the most implicit confidence in them. Many a time he left my camp at night to walk alone for a mile or more through the jungle without even a light, simply drawing his sword and grasping it firmly in his old and half-palsied hand. Yet the jungle was full of dangers, both man and animal. On one occasion a tiger was positively known to be prowling about in the immediate neighbourhood, and it had actually killed a deer only the morning before within half a mile. Yet when I strongly urged upon the old man to take a lantern and allow me to send two or three men with him as an escort home, he laughed at the notion, and drawing his *betua* blade tapped it affectionately, assuring me with the utmost seriousness that anybody armed with that was much more than a match for any tiger. And when he gave it to me—I did my best to avoid robbing him of an object to which he attached so much value, and which had been in his family for more generations than he could remember—he conceived and explained that he was rendering me a very real service by thus enabling me to protect myself against many dangers. I trust that my pistol will serve him at least as well in case of need. The Chinese miners appeared at their doors or the mouths of their adits as I passed and presented me with bottles of *samshu*, the Chinese rice-wine, which grows very heady with keeping, and the poorer settlers passed water-melons up to me on the elephant. All day long we plodded toward the stream where I expected to find my boatmen and the results of their week's work. There were no gradients, but the ground was so soft that for choice we forsook the path and marched in the bed of the little river.



MY RAFTS ON THE KELANTAN RIVER.

After thereby losing our way, and having to cut a new road through the jungle, we came at length to Kampong Stah, a village on the Sungei Tado, just below its junction with the Blimbing and the Sakaw. Here the boatmen had constructed a capital camp; they were on the best of terms with the people, who were eagerly expecting us, as they had never seen white man before; and what was of far more interest, two splendid house-rafts and one flat raft were moored in the stream. These were masterpieces of bamboo wood-craft. Four or five layers of large bamboo, cut off above a joint at each end, so as to be water-tight, formed the raft part, and upon these was built a capital little house, closed at the back and sides except for little windows covered with a curtain of attap-thatch, and with a pent-roof. Forward and aft were short uprights as rowlocks for the long paddles, and these again were all ready, made of course of the inevitable bamboo. Punt-poles had also been provided, and so thoughtful were the builders that they had actually added little fastenings on each wall in which my guns and rifle could be placed. The "contractors," however, had played their part less creditably. I had no sooner arrived than I was asked for money to pay for all that had been done and spent. I had advanced seven dollars to an individual called the Penghulu Puteh, or "white magistrate," to pay these men. I asked where he was, and was told in his house miles away. I sent telling him to come at once. He returned an answer that he was ill and could not. Not one cent had he ever given, and as I did not choose to waste a day in doing justice to him, he was able to keep the results of his swindling.

It was a busy day at Kampong Stah. All the followers had to be paid off, the elephant-hire paid, and the beasts sent back. The stores had to be reduced to the capacity of the rafts, and a careful selection made among the geological specimens. Most difficult of all, however, men had to be found if possible to accompany me down the river to the coast. This task proved insuperable. One man only could I hire, but he

was a good one. His name was the Penghulu Bujoh; he was a person of some official position and authority; his fame was great as a hunter; and his happy face and frank cheery manner at once impressed me in his favour. But in spite of his assistance, and lavish promises of both pay and protection, not another man could be persuaded. At last Ali took me aside and explained the cause of this unwillingness. Quite recently, it appeared, the Sultan of Kelantan, whose mere name sent a shudder through the natives even here in another State, had sent word that if any man gave help of any kind whatever to a white man to assist him to enter Kelantan, he, the Sultan, would cut off the offender's hands and feet, confiscate his property, and make slaves of the male members of his family and concubines of the female ones. This threat had the desired effect. So I fell back upon the arrangement I had previously planned as a *pis aller*, and took with me seven of the boatmen I had brought with me, first making them a solemn and public promise that if I lived I would see them safely out of the dominions of the Sultan of Kelantan before I parted from them. Thus at last everything was arranged, and when I had taken leave of Bozzolo we were ready to start. The men were collected, and the order given to push off. Seeing what lay before me, the moment would probably have given rise to some sentimental reflections if an incident had not occurred to turn everybody's thoughts into another channel. The Tado is a small but fairly swift stream at this point, and just below Kampong Stah are some difficult rapids. We had been afloat two minutes when, owing to some delay in the punters getting to work, my raft began to turn across stream. A warning cry from behind called sharp attention to the danger. Every man sprang to the oars and poles, but the raft had been caught by the current. In another minute we should have been drifting down the rapids, stern first, and the least that could have happened was the destruction of the raft and the loss of everything on board. Ali and the Penghulu were the first to grasp

the situation, and both sprang into the river and tried to hold the raft. "Overboard!" I shouted to the Sikhs, and they instantly obeyed. A moment later I followed them, and Walab followed me. It was only up to my armpits in depth, so nothing followed beyond the wetting, though Walab, whose courage was greater than his strength, was nearly drowned. All this time Bozzolo had watched the scene from his elephant on the top of a neighbouring hillock, and he waved his hat sympathetically. That was the last I saw of him.

By the time we had successfully negotiated the first rapids a change had come over the scene. Babel had given place to a dead silence, the village and every sign of human life had disappeared, the stream had broadened out and was as quiet as an autumn pool, magnificent trees overhung the river and came down to meet their shadows in the water, the men were standing idly by their dripping poles, wondering at the impressive spectacle, and not a sound broke the stillness. From a complete green arch behind, the second raft emerged in silence. So began my trip through Kelantan. It was one of the rare times of the poetry and perfect pleasure of travel. But to enjoy such moments one must be alone. The voice of even a friend would have jarred like the breaking of glass. A day like this is worth a year of life at home. But interruptions soon came. First a touch on the shoulder from the Penghulu showed me a fine peacock pluming himself on the bank about a hundred and fifty yards ahead, and I managed to bag him with a rook-rifle when we had drifted a little nearer. Then an exciting chase after a wounded iguana occupied us for some time. Every now and then the rowers would lay down their oars by a common impulse, and when I looked inquiringly at them would remark with a smile, "*Makan pinang, Tuan,*" literally, "Eat betel, Sir." The little pot of *chunam*, or lime, would be produced, a *sireh* leaf selected and coated with it, a bit of betel-nut chipped off and rolled in the leaf, and the package chewed with every sign of gratification and refreshment. The *pinang* is to the Malay

what the cigarette and the brandy-and-soda are to the Englishman at home. The gift of a little of my own tobacco to roll into a cigarette, since the tobacco with which I supplied them as part of their rations did not lend itself kindly to cigarette-making, would put fresh vigour into their efforts. About four o'clock on the first day we espied a nice stretch of sandy bank and stopped there. Then the rice-pots were brought out, the evening meal prepared, a few stories told, to which I was usually a listener, and the arrangement made whereby Buta, Menir Khan, Ali, the Penghulu and I divided up the night into sentry-watches. On this night, just as the pots were boiling, the river suddenly and inexplicably began to rise, and extinguished all our fires.

Except for the adventures it might bring and the new light it threw upon this unknown country and its inhabitants, one day was exactly like another. Each ended as I have just described. It began by my waking under the mosquito-curtain, warm and snug, "safe from the bites of noxious insects, free from the infection of malarious diseases," as the "Hints to Travellers" impressively says. There are no sounds of movement in camp. I ought to get up—an early start is everything. I look out. A thick white mist is over all, and the mosquito-curtain is soaked. I remember all my acquaintances who have been struck down with fever from Malay travelling. "Early rising is fatal in malarious localities," says the "Hints" again. I open my watch; it is five o'clock. There is nothing for it, however, so I plunge out and into the river, and my shout sets everybody stirring. In a minute or two a couple of fires are blazing; the pots and the kettle are boiled, the men and Walab jump on board with them, and we are off by half-past five.

The principal events of the first day or two were the rapids, of which there were many, and bad ones. There is suddenly a roaring ahead, and big black rocks are discovered, with a narrow opening between them, diagonally athwart the stream, through which the water is pouring like a

mill-race. Everybody pulls and pushes, and lifts and poles; often the boatmen are in the water up to their necks. Slowly the raft scrapes to the opening, then "feels a thrill of life along its keel," or would if it had one; the waders leap on board; the oarsmen struggle and shout. For a minute or two it is touch-and-go whether or not the raft spins and is wrecked. Below the rapid there is always a stretch of quiet water, and the moment we are in it comes the inevitable remark, "*Makan pinang, Tuan.*" During the first day there was not a single *kampong*, but by the afternoon of the second we reached the clearing of a Chinaman who collects Customs for the Raja of Legê upon everything that comes up the river. He was a very friendly person, and was glad to sell me fowls, ducks, and coconuts; though the fowls were so wild and athletic from the amount of exercise they have to take to pick up a living, that after we bought a dozen my men had to organise a regular hunt before they could catch them. This man told me that with a quick canoe he gets from his house to Kota Bharu, the residence of the Sultan of Kelantan, in three days, so that with my rafts I might hope to make the journey in five. I hired an additional boatman here for part of the journey. Next day we came to a place where the river banks were all broken down by the trampling of a herd of wild elephants; and while we were looking at this we suddenly heard a tremendous outcry behind us, and the Chinese Towkay of the day before, and his termagant of a Chinese-Malay wife, came shooting down in a long, narrow dug-out. The woman had a huge old navy revolver, eighteen inches long, slung in a holster round her neck, and was evidently thirsting for somebody's blood. It appeared that their long-boat was stolen during the night, and she wished to take back the man I had hired, that he might join in the pursuit. It took her ten minutes of excited talking at the top of her voice to convey this fact to me. I said, "All right. I advanced this man two dollars; give me them back, and he can go with you." She subsided as suddenly as if she were shot with her own

pistol. As Ali said, "At first she was as big as this"—stretching out both his arms—"then when *Tuan* said 'two dollars,' she was as big as this"—showing the nail of his little finger; "if *Tuan* had said 'four dollars,' we should not have been able to see her at all!" At nine o'clock on this day, we went through the last rapid, Jeram Penara, which forms the boundary between the States of Legè and Kelantan. Here then, at last, we were in the forbidden State.

While the boats were being piloted through the rapid we got some cooking done, and I went off with my gun as usual, a ball in one barrel and shot in the other, to see if I could pick up anything. After about a quarter of an hour's walking, I heard a rustling in some thick growth in front of me. I proceeded very cautiously, thinking it was some small animal, and at last I located it in a particular bush. Then I gently pushed aside the branches with the barrels of my gun, and looked through. At the same moment the branches were parted from the opposite side, and a wild face, only half-human, looked straight into my own at the distance of a few feet. We were both taken aback; but the native recovered himself first, and with a sharp cry of terror disappeared in the jungle. It was no doubt one of the *Sakeis*, or semi-wild men, who are to be found in several parts of the Malay Peninsula. They are in a very low state of civilisation, stand greatly in fear of the Malays, and live entirely on the roots they dig up with a split bamboo, and the small birds and animals they can shoot with a small bow and arrow or a blow-pipe. They are very expert with the latter, and are said to employ powerful poison for their darts and arrows. So I thought myself fortunate not to have one of these in me unawares; but I felt rather elated that my approach had been so silent that this consummate woodsman had not discovered me before I discovered him. I might tell a score of other sporting anecdotes connected with this particular trip, but, as I have said before, this book is not the place for them. Soon after this the river, which is here called the Pergau, increased



SHOPS IN A MALAY TOWN.



A MALAY DRAMA, BEFORE THE SULTAN.

in width till it was eighty yards wide, and apparently ran straight to the foot of the highest hill I had yet seen, called Bukit Pagah. On each side of the river was a village—the one on the right called Kampong Reka Bharu, or “New Echo,” and on the left Kampong Reka Tua, or “Old Echo.” In Legè the villages had seemed fairly prosperous, but these were the first specimens of what I afterwards found so often in Kelantan: places where at one time there had evidently been a small and flourishing community, of which the number of coconut trees furnished a good index, but now virtually deserted, the houses empty and falling to pieces, the cultivated land lapsing into jungle again, and the inhabitants dead of smallpox, murdered, or fled. Next day we reached Kuala Pergau, where this river runs into the Kelantan River, and as we approached the junction we found a broad navigable stream flowing into it obliquely and following the same course. The Kelantan River, according to the native view, does not begin till its junction with the Pergau, but this is contrary to proper geographical definition, as from its source in the hills of the district known as Ulu Kelantan—but never yet visited by any white man—to its mouth on the east coast, the Kelantan River is one and the same, and the Pergau is only one of its many affluents. Mr. Bozzolo states that the name of the Kelantan River above the Pergau is “Sungei Engere,” but this is inaccurate, as no such name is known to the natives, who, without exception, call it Sungei Negiri. The Kelantan River at this point is from a hundred to a hundred and fifty yards wide, and probably six feet deep at its shallowest part, with fine ranges of wooded hills visible in the distance. Looking back, there was as beautiful a river view as I have ever seen, recalling the woods of Cliefden on the Thames. The speed of the current in many places may be judged from the fact that though I saw a number of wild pigeons, splendid kingfishers, and hornbills in the trees, the river was too swift for us to attempt to beach the rafts. When this country is at length explored by a naturalist, it will be famous for its king-

fishers, which are among the most beautiful birds I have ever seen. The Malays call them *perkaka*, a word made up of the prefix *per* and an imitation of the Aristophanic sound *kak-kak-kak* that the kingfisher makes when alarmed. Other beautiful birds that I saw here, and afterwards succeeded in shooting, were the *burong tiong*, a large black red-billed bird with golden ear-flaps and scarlet feet, and the *burong beruka*, a large pale-green and yellow pigeon. An amusing incident occurred when I went shooting one morning with the Penghulu Bujoh. I had shot several of these in rapid succession, and he ran to pick them up while I went in another direction. When he rejoined me I found that he had carefully cut the throat of each bird, nearly severing its head from its body and of course completely destroying the plumage. He had never imagined that they could be wanted except for food, and therefore like a good Mahomedan he had performed the *semblek* upon them! There was an old man living here, at a place called Kampong Dusun Renda (the village of the Low Orchard), who had formerly acted as a guide to Government surveying-parties in Selangor, but was now making his living at a gold-mine he alone knew of, near Kuala Jinam. He went to this every morning, spent the day washing for gold, and returned at night with his little stock. I bought from him some extremely good gold, so rough as to be almost nuggets. There are also gold-mines at Kuala Tosi in this neighbourhood. Further down the river, at Kuala Tuko, I heard that there were gold-diggings which had been successfully worked by a party of Chinamen, who, however, had deserted them three months before because of the impossibility of procuring rice or any supplies, and because the Raja had forbidden the opening of new mines. At Kampong Lalat, still further down, I came upon one of the few places in Kelantan where anything of the least value is produced. Here was an earthenware industry, where pots and vessels of singularly graceful shape were made. For a small sum I bought a basketful of these, and succeeded in bringing several of them uninjured to London, although they

are extremely brittle. At Kampong Lalat, too, I saw a big boat being built to go to the Galas gold-mines in Ulu Kelantan, a fact which throws light both on the value of these famous mines and on the navigability of the Kelantan River. It was 35 feet long, 4 feet 7 inches beam, and would carry 100 *gantangs* of rice—say, according to the *gantang* used at Temoh, 3,400 lb., at any rate, not far from a ton and a half. The men who were building it said that its price when finished would be ten dollars—certainly the cheapest craft I ever heard of. Below this place the river passes a big outcrop of rocks called Batu Mâkbang, and then widens almost into a lake, with an exquisite view in both directions. Here I passed a large boat going up to Temoh with Chinese things to sell, and a crew of four Chinamen on board.

After leaving Batu Mâkbang, we stopped at five o'clock on an extensive sandbank, as my men had promised to start again at the rising of the moon, and here occurred the most ticklish incident of my river journey. When the Chinese boat passed us during the afternoon, I had noticed that one of the men on my last raft was acquainted with a Chinaman on board, and that they had rapidly exchanged a dozen sentences, though I was too far ahead to catch anything that was said. It now appeared that my extra raft-man was in the service of the Chinaman who owned the boat, and the latter had shouted to him that the Sultan of Kelantan was very angry with me, that he had sworn no white man should pass out of the river to sea, and that he was sending a boat filled with armed men to stop me and turn my expedition out of the country. This boat, the Chinaman had added, was just behind him, and as the raft had drifted out of earshot his last shouted words had been, "Take care of yourself, because the Raja is very angry with you." The raft-man had told Mahmat, he had told Taik Choon, and the latter told me. So I called up Ali and the Penghulu Bujoh and consulted with them. The situation was certainly unpleasant. Ali and the Penghulu regarded the matter in a very serious light. I

explained to them that I was not in the least afraid of the Raja or his armed men, because, in the first place, I felt sure he would not have given them orders to attack us, and, second, even if they did show fight, I was confident that we were numerous enough and well-armed enough, if only we stood by one another, to defeat not only one but many boat-loads of men. They advised me to call all my people together and explain the matter to them. So they were all collected, and sat in a semi-circle on the sand. Then I made Mahmat read the letter I had written to the Raja telling him that I was a peaceful traveller crossing his country with a royal passport from Siam, and that I personally stood security for my people. I showed them the *thongkra* with the big seal, the Malay letters in their yellow silk envelopes; and then I addressed them as follows: "The Raja does not know that I am travelling here by the permission of greater men than himself, or he would not be angry. But I do not believe this Chinaman's tale. It is only a Chinese lie. There is no boat coming to stop me, and if there were, what of it? The Raja dare not harm a white man. Remember Perak. The *Tugn Besar* was killed. What is Perak now? Remember Pahang. Only a Chinaman, but a British subject, was killed by the Raja. What is Pahang now? The Raja of Kelantan will not dare to touch one hair of my moustache. I have come here to go to Kota Bharu and Singapore, and I am going to Kota Bharu and Singapore. I have promised to take care of you all and to see you safe out of this wicked country, and I will do so. If a boat comes, or many boats, no matter. If they are good, I am good: if they are *jehat*, I am *jehat* also." Then I told them to go and cook their rice and think the matter over, and return and tell me their decision. This said, I went and sat down at a distance and smoked a cheroot.

In spite of this brave speech, however, I had one very real fear, and that was lest my people should run away. This would leave me absolutely stranded, and was quite likely to happen in consequence of the Sultan's threats. There was nothing to

prevent them deserting me, and the very name of Kelantan was almost enough to strike terror into them. In ten minutes they would have disappeared into the jungle. Then in the morning they would have only to cut down a score bamboos with their *parangs*, make a raft, cut a pole or two, and go straight back upstream and make their way home across country. I, on the other hand, should be left perfectly helpless in the middle of the most dangerous State in the Malay Peninsula, totally unable to go either backwards or forwards, as I could not navigate a raft by myself and no native would either help me or supply me with food. Everything I possessed and had collected would be stolen and destroyed, and probably not for many years to come, if ever, would even the place or the circumstances of my death become known, since my men would of course deny all knowledge of me, to cover their own desertion, and the Raja of Kelantan would deny it equally from fear of reprisals by other white men. Curiously enough, I learned later, on my return to Singapore, that the Governor of the Straits Settlements and the Resident of Perak were exchanging telegrams at this time concerning the desirability of sending out a search-party to look for me, as my journey had already lasted much longer than I had originally expected.

In the meantime, the men sat in circles round their respective rice-pots, discussing the situation in low tones. I had a good deal of sympathy with them, for it must be remembered that for a Raja to fine them, or make slaves of them, or kill them, depends upon nothing whatever except his wish to do so, and they are as helpless in his hands as a chip in a surf. It was by this time quite dark, and Ali came across to me and whispered that two big boats, each filled with men, had just slipped down the river under the shadow of the trees opposite. One of the Sikhs also told me that he had seen them—probably fifty men in each boat. This looked rather like a gathering of the clans, and disposed me to put faith in the Chinaman's story.

When the men had eaten their rice, I called to Ali to tell them

to come back. They assembled again, and he, speaking for them all, replied that they were willing to go on; and speaking for himself, he declared that he would stick to me, Raja or no Raja. The Penghulu Bujoh rose, untied about twenty knots in his handkerchief, produced from the last one a new percussion-cap, placed it solemnly upon the nipple of his huge old muzzle-loader, and then stated that he too was my friend, and that if any of the Raja's men wished to fight, he was now ready for them. So we started, in the dark, down the river, and I was amused to notice that whereas before the alarm the rafts had been scattered and the last one usually a mile behind the first, now they could have been covered, like a pack of hounds, with a table-cloth.

Two hours later a terrific tropical storm suddenly broke upon us, with deafening thunder and blinding lightning. The river here was at least three hundred yards wide, and the wind raised such waves that only with the greatest difficulty could we prevent our rafts from being swamped before we could get them safely under shelter. I took several of the men, among whom I had previously distributed the arms, under the roof of my own raft, and the rest made a shelter out of a tarpaulin; and all night long we sat there in the downpour, each man nursing his gun and devoured by ferocious mosquitoes. When day at length dawned we presented a pitiful spectacle.

By noon of the fifth day we reached Tana Merah—literally, "Red Earth"—one of the most important villages in Kelantan. For the first time we saw signs of life and commerce, many trading boats being tied up at the foot of a high bank. With Ali and Taik Choon I scrambled up, and found at the top a dozen stalls offering cotton *sarongs*, matches, cakes, *blachang*—a favourite Malay condiment made of rotten prawns—and the hundred odds and ends of a Chinese shop. As we were walking through this primitive bazaar a tall Malay, the conspicuous kris in his belt politely covered by a cloth—the sign of friendly intentions—suddenly barred our way, and, in a voice trembling with excite-

ment, said, "*Ta bulik masoh, Tuan*"—"You cannot enter, Sir." I asked why, and he said that the Chinese Towkay had sent out to forbid us. So I turned back, and conspicuously asked one of the Malays standing by, what was the Towkay's name? He answered, Liu Wat. So I told Taik Choon to go and tell him that I should inform the Sultan I had been refused entrance to the bazaar. As I expected, Taik Choon soon returned, saying the Towkay explained that he did not know who I was, and therefore had forbidden my entrance; now that he knew, he would be glad to see us, but he could not come out to meet us, as he was sick and unable to walk. We went up into his big court-yard, where many *kajangs*, a sort of roof-mat, were drying, into a Chinese reception hall, where the same tall Malay who had previously stopped me, now politely invited us to enter. The Towkay was sitting on his bed, suffering from a kind of paralysis in the right leg. Stools were brought, and I had a long conversation with him. First of all, of course, he wanted medicine for his leg. I inquired into the symptoms and found I could do nothing, so I urged him strongly to go to Singapore to be treated. He was born here, but had once before been to Singapore, and said that he should take my advice. On leaving, I told him I was glad he had invited me into his house, as I should not now have to report his refusal, and I hoped that in future he would see that the *orang puteh* was politely received by his people. He was a merchant and planter, growing pepper and gambier, and dealing in cottons. There are about a hundred people in the place, and only one white man had been there before. After many "good words" at parting, he said we could now buy anything we liked. I went back to one shop, and was looking at some silk *sarongs*, when Taik Choon asked me privately to tell him which I wanted, and to go away. I did so, and he brought them, telling me that two truculent-looking Malays who were seated by the Towkay were *penghulus* sent by the Raja to forbid the people to allow us to land, or sell us anything, under heavy penalties. Therefore the Chinese

traders had asked Taik Choon to let them sell to him and not to us. The Towkay also sent a message to me, requesting that if I were asked whether I had bought anything in Tana Merah I should say no. It must not be forgotten that this is, with one single exception—Mr. Bozzolo's previous rapid journey down the river—a country absolutely unvisited by the white man. From Temoh to Kuala Pergau no white man at all had ever been; and even between Tana Merah and the capital, whenever we approached any land, the children shrieked and the adults ran away. When we camped that night, Ali came to me and said, "Are the Tuan's guns all ready?" "Why?" "*Adah orang-orang jehat banyak disini*"—"There are many bad men about here." And as Ali had no kris, he borrowed my hunting-knife. It was very cold and damp that night, and doing sentry-go was dreary work. My Malays coughed all night long, and I could hear them shivering. Their only clothing was a couple of thin cotton cloths, and yet several of them had big gold buttons knotted on their handkerchiefs, and could perfectly well afford a blanket or cloak. Buta took pity on one of them, and lent him his thick woollen military cape. We stopped later at Kampong Panah, exactly opposite the big hill of the same name, and a score of Chinamen came down to see us—Ho-kiens, engaged in raising peas. There were eighty of them living there, and about a hundred Malays. They were born at Panah, and had never seen a white man before; so I said I should charge them ten cents each for looking at me, and they thought it a capital joke.

Next morning the river had become broad and still, with long stretches between low-wooded banks, fringed almost all the way on the left bank with coconut and areca-nut palms. The *kampongs* now began to look fairly prosperous, enclosed in neat solid fences, with prettily-built *jambans* of mat-work on the beach. Taik Choon told me here that he had learned the Sultan had sent strict orders to prevent us going ashore anywhere, and that the storekeepers at Tana Merah were to be fined ten dollars

for selling things to us. At Kampong Paser Mas we found a big village, fronting on the river for several hundred yards. Many boats were anchored or sailing about, and the women and men were dressed in the brightest colours, barbarously combined but occasionally hitting off a fine effect. I heard of a remarkable mine of galena some distance ahead, at a place called Fenei; so, I despatched Ali on foot to get information about it, and meet us lower down. Two hours later he hailed us from the shore, waded out, and swam to the raft, holding his clothes above his head. His report was simply, "*Sudah pergi Pahang.*" All the miners had fled into Pahang ten months ago. By midday the river had widened to a quarter of a mile, and as a fresh breeze was blowing, numbers of sailing-boats were coming up. Ahead, on a high bank, we could see a big town of many houses, stretching out of sight; on the left a long sandspit came into view, and through my glass I discovered opposite to it a shore crowded with houses and boats, many of them sea-going craft. It was Kota Bharu, the capital of Kelantan, at last.

On our right as we drifted down was a row of palisades, half a mile long. Good-looking houses nestled each in its little clump of fruit-trees, with coconut palms waving overhead. Crowds of people were walking up and down a kind of natural boulevard. *Mudjis* with their white headgear; gaily-dressed women; men, each with at least two *krises* stuck in his waist-cloth; and scores of naked urchins skylarking in the water. Long wooden ladders gave access from the bank to the river. The peaked roof of a mosque, or Chinese temple, stood up among the trees, and the buzz of a big town soon became audible. As I was uncertain what reception we should meet with, and as the surroundings of a native community are always of the most insanitary character, I beached the rafts and set up my tent on the clean sandspit, exactly opposite the main street.

By way of opening communications with the Sultan I immediately despatched Taik Choon, in his best clothes, to the headman of the Chinese to learn if he would undertake to deliver a

letter. Soon after my boat had gone, a canoe came swiftly across the river and stopped alongside, two men paddling it, and a third, evidently a person of consequence, his kris covered with a gay silk *sarong*, seated in the middle. " *Tabi, Tuan,*" said he, and we exchanged a few commonplace greetings. Then he inquired casually, "Where have you come from?" "From Legê." "How long has it taken you?" "Seven days." "How long do you intend to stay?" "I don't know. A few days." "Where will you go next?" "To Tringanu." "And then?" But it was my turn now. " *Sudah-lah*—enough of this. Now, who sent you here?" "Nobody." "What do you want?" "Nothing at all." "Are you one of the Sultan's men?" "No." "Or one of the Ministers?" "No. *Tabi, Tuan.*" " *Tabi.*" And he paddled away, of course to go straight back to the Sultan with his information. Such is a fair specimen of a Malay conversation. At dusk Taik Choon returned, saying the *Kepitan China* was rather afraid of the Sultan, who was very angry, and that he dare not deliver my letter. So I sent him back to give it to the *Nisso*—a Minister I had heard of. He returned very late, saying that the Minister had promised to give the letter to the Sultan early in the morning.

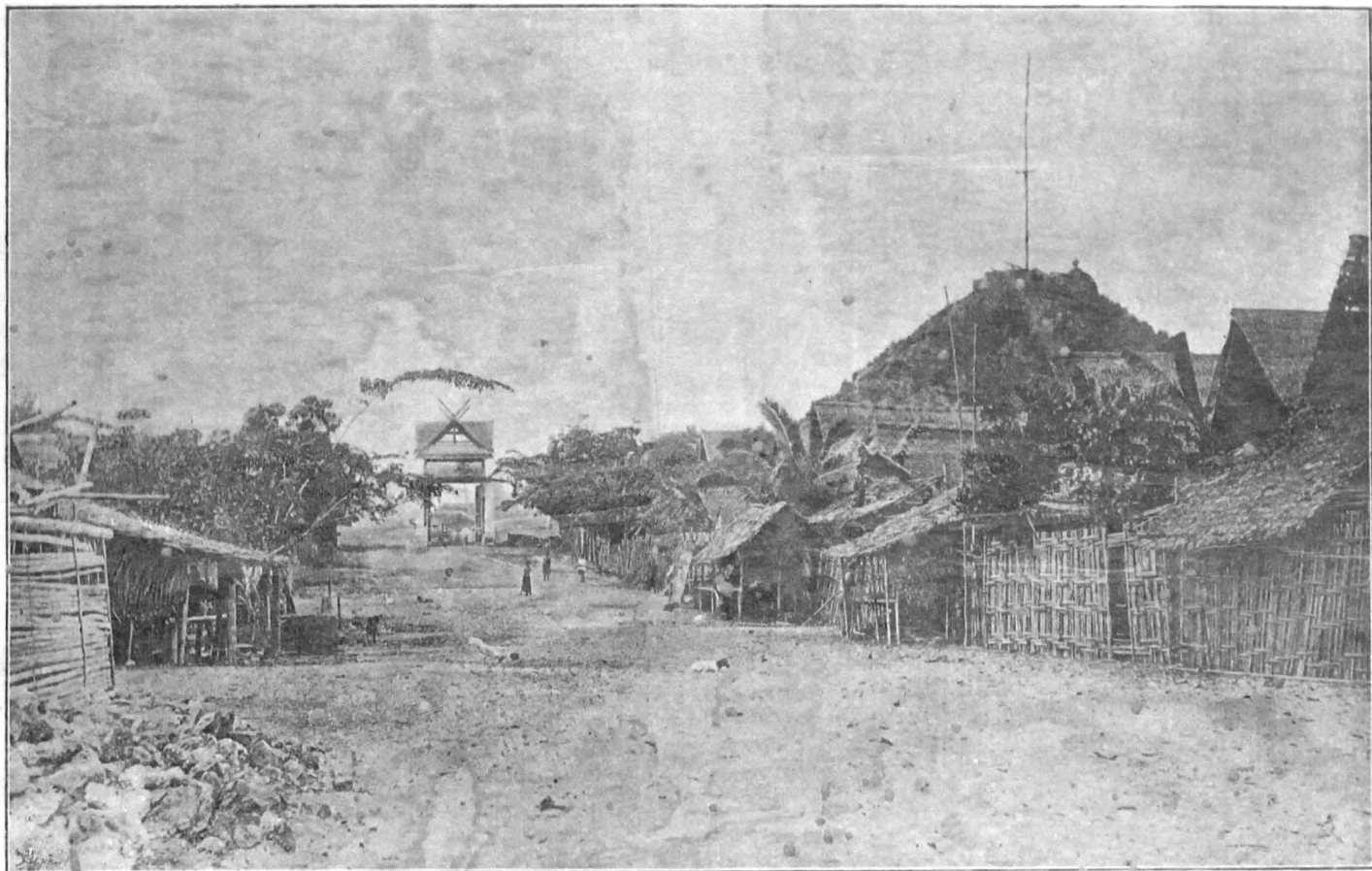
Next day I rose early, dressed myself in my one civilized suit, and went across to the town. On landing, I discovered the Sultan examining a huge shed-like erection which was being built to receive the King of Siam, who was expected on a visit; so I promptly turned in another direction, as I did not wish to meet the Sultan except by appointment. *Kotâ Bharu* is very much like other Malay towns except for its big mosque. The main street runs at right angles to the river, the upper side of it being the Malay town and the lower side the Chinese town. A long jetty and covered promenade was being put up for the King's landing, and a very small Siamese flag was fluttering at the river end of it. The *Nisso* was not at home, so with Taik Choon I went on to a Chinese shop and asked to see some of the

famous Kelantan silks. The shopkeeper produced a few, and while I was looking at them a woman turned up with two or three more, then a boy with others, till at last the shop and street were crowded with people wishing to sell. After spending all my available dollars in buying the really beautiful *sarongs* and *kain lepas* that are only to be procured here, I went back to the Minister's and found him at home. Mats were politely offered us to sit upon, and after a few minutes he came in, nervously chewing betel—a big heavy man with a cruel shaven face and cropped hair, wearing a *sarong* and striped jacket of black and red silk, and fingering the black-handled gold-decorated kris in his belt. He shook hands affably, and after the usual conversation, in the course of which I learned that his name was Sri Paduka Wan Yusuf, he said that the Sultan would receive me at two o'clock. When we were half-way back to the raft, however, I learned by accident that the Sultan proposed to receive me in the unfinished shed, where he was going again to inspect the decorations. This, of course, would have been the most undignified reception possible, and would have lowered the prestige of any Europeans who might come after me. I therefore decided to take a high line and refuse the invitation. So I sent Taik Choon back to Wan Yusuf with a message, carefully worded, saying that I was accustomed to be received with courtesy and in a friendly manner by the rulers of all the countries I travelled through, and that the Sultan must either grant me a formal audience or I should go away without seeing him at all. Then I went back to the raft. When Taik Choon returned, I found that he had so much improved upon my message as to say that I had important business with the Sultan, and that I insisted upon seeing him alone immediately. This was, of course, utterly out of the question: I might as well have asked for one of his ears. I rated Taik Choon soundly and sent him back again to put matters right. An hour afterwards he returned in a great hurry, white to the lips, and gasped out the news that the

Sultan had sent to seize one of the men I had brought from Perak, had had the man dragged before him by three of his armed followers, had questioned him closely about where he came from, whether I had much *batu mas*—literally, gold-stone—with me, whether I had much money, &c., to all of which the man had replied that he did not know. He declared that he had come from Klang, but the Sultan said he knew he came from Perak, and that if he told lies he would put him in prison and keep him there. The man was still, Taik Choon said, detained in the street just behind the big shed. Of course there was no time to lose, so taking the two Sikhs with me, and without visible arms, though we each had a revolver strapped where it could not be seen, I rowed straight across to the town. I found the man in a state of dreadful fright, as he had expected every minute to be krissed or have his hands cut off, in the middle of a band of the Sultan's men. The three of us walked through the group without a word; I took the Perak man by the arm, saying, "There is a mistake; this man is mine," and marched him straight back to the river, the crowd falling apart and nobody offering any resistance. This incident, however, frightened the men so much that they begged me not to send them across the river again, as they feared the Sultan would carry them off.

My prompt action in this case, and my refusal to accept the invitation the Sultan had sent me, produced a good effect, and later in the day Wan Yusuf sent a message to say that the Sultan would receive me the next day in a hall, also built to receive the King of Siam, but finished and decorated, and therefore a suitable place. Before I saw him, however, one of my strangest Eastern experiences happened. During that night I received two visitors who made to me the most remarkable proposal it has ever been my lot to receive.

Just before dusk, Ali brought me word that two messengers from the town wished to speak to me, but they would not come to my tent, and asked me to go down to them just where the



THE MAIN STREET AND ENTRANCE TO THE SULTAN'S RESIDENCE, TRINGANU

sandspit ended and the trees began. I naturally suspected some plot, but Ali said he was sure there were only two of them, so I went with him. One I immediately recognised as a man I had seen in the Sultan's retinue the same morning. They asked me to speak with them alone for a minute, and I walked twenty steps or so away with them. Then they told me, with every appearance of alarm and secrecy, that the four younger brothers of the Sultan wished to know if I would receive them in the middle of the night, as they had some important news to tell me. I asked, of course, why they did not come across openly in daylight. The messengers explained that they were afraid of their brother the Sultan, who kept them shut up in the house, and never allowed them to go out without being watched, and that if he caught them visiting me he would be furious, and the consequences unpleasant for everybody concerned. I still had my suspicions about this proposal, and asked them a number of questions, but finally came to the conclusion that the affair was as they said, and therefore, as it seemed to promise an adventure out of the common, I said I would be alone in my tent waiting for them at midnight. Accordingly, after all my men had turned in, I put out my light and sat inside the tent door, waiting. By and by I saw two figures in the darkness, some distance away, making signs to me. To go to them alone under such circumstances seemed rather like tempting Providence, so I quietly called Buta, who was on duty at the raft, and together we walked over to where I had seen the figures. These proved to be the two men who had brought the message to me. "Where are the princes?" I asked. "They say they are sorry, but they cannot come." "Why not?" "*Orang-orang jaga*"—"Men are on the watch." The Sultan was keeping so close a guard over his brothers that they were unable to slip away; so the appointment was renewed for the following night. I adopted the same precautions, and at one o'clock they came: four young princes, with the same two men. The latter stayed outside with one of

the Sikhs whom I posted at a distance with orders to allow no person whatever to come near the tent. Then for four hours I listened to a strange tale. As the persons chiefly concerned in it are still living, and Kota Bharu is not far enough from Singapore to preclude the transmission of news, I must necessarily suppress many of the details. The point of the interview was, that they considered their brother the Sultan had usurped the royal authority, and had used the money of all his brothers to bribe Siamese recognition of his position. He was, they told me, very cruel to everybody, themselves included; he was determined not to allow white men to enter the State, and had given savage orders to exclude them; he was greatly hated even by most of his own people; and they had determined to attempt a revolution. The stories they told me about their brother won my sympathy, and the one of themselves whom they proposed to set upon the throne impressed me as a young man of great intelligence and kindness of character. They assured me that at a signal from them, three out of every four Malays in the district would revolt. What they lacked was, first, arms, and second, money; the Sultan having plenty of both. They asked me if I thought the *Tuan Yang Terutama Gebenor* at Singapore would sympathise with their cause and help them. I smiled as I thought of the reception I should have from Sir Cecil Smith if I made myself their messenger, and I told them that though it was practically certain, in my opinion, that the Governor would take no steps to replace their brother in authority if they once succeeded in overthrowing him, I was far more certain that no British official help would under any circumstances be given them in the process. Then they pressed their plan home. Would I undertake to secure for them a certain sum in dollars, and to bring it, with arms and ammunition, to a point on the coast where trusted followers of their own would meet me? If I would do this, they promised, first, that no unnecessary cruelty should be perpetrated; second, that the State of Kelantan should be thrown open to white men,

and concessions for mining and planting be given upon reasonable terms; third, that they would confer upon me certain privileges, upon which I need not dwell. I will not deny that for the moment the proposition distinctly tempted me.

The result, if successful, would have been in every way an advantage to the miserable people of Kelantan and to my own countrymen. Moreover, it would only be anticipating by a few years an inevitable political development. The character of the Sultan and his rule were such that nobody need feel a moment's scruple in trying to overthrow him. In the Far East I knew a dozen men who would have provided a share of the necessary funds. The fight itself would have been neither long nor severe; the results in my own case would have been very satisfactory; and no great relish for adventure was needed to render the enterprise tempting from that point of view. I told them I would consider their proposal, and just before dawn they left me, stole along the bank to where their canoe was hidden a mile above, and slipped back across the river. Daylight, however, and sober reflection painted the scheme in its true colours, and the power of the conventionality from which not even a lonely traveller can escape, asserted itself. So when they returned the next night, I told them that such an affair was not to be thought of. They charged me, however, to remember, after I had left, many things which they impressed upon me, and departed with the expression of a hope that I might some day return to Kelantan more disposed to aid in rescuing her from her sad fate. I believe the Sultan has since died or been made away with, and that one of my midnight visitors has succeeded him; so now, at any rate, there would be but three plotters against authority. The would-be Sultan gave me a little gold-mounted *badik*, or stabbing knife, for a parting gift, and when I look at it I cannot help comparing myself, *longo intervallo*, with a famous European conspirator of modern times, who was presented with a jewelled dagger for his great deed, but who sold the hilt and did not use the blade.

My interview with the notorious Sultan was "more for the honour of the thing," than for any practical result. He was a man on this side of middle age, rather pale, furtive-looking, and with deep marks of cruelty and dissipation on his face. When I was led into the reception hall he was already seated upon a deer-skin on a raised platform, surrounded by his Ministers and a dozen heavily-armed men. Behind him stood officials bearing his golden kris and other insignia of royalty. The floor of the hall was nearly filled with seated Malays, all dressed in brightly-coloured *sarong* and *baju*, every man armed to the teeth. A less prepossessing set of people I have seldom seen, and I must confess that I felt a certain thrill as I looked round at their obviously angry faces and reflected that a single word of irritation from the potentate of evil reputation before me would bring this and all other journeys to an abrupt end for me. He had intended that I should take a seat upon the bare floor in front of him, by which arrangement my head would have been just at the height of his feet, to say nothing of the awkward figure inevitably cut by a man in European clothes squatting upon the floor. I had foreseen this situation, however, and provided against it, and when he motioned me to sit down, I made a sign to Walab, who stepped forward, looking very fine in his white tunic, scarlet turban and gold sash, and unfolded for me a small stool, upon which I proceeded to make myself at home. This took the Sultan by surprise, and he had a second's hesitation while he evidently reflected whether this presumption should not be resented. Our conversation was at first of the customary formal character. Then I asked him if it were true that he had sent orders up the river to turn me back, to forbid me to land, and to prevent me buying anything from the people. He said that he had not done so, but that the people were foolish and did not like white men, and that if I would tell him what I wished to buy, he would see that it was supplied to me. He added that one white man who had visited Kota Bharu before had behaved very badly indeed, and had

even carried off the wife of one of his own men. I replied that if this fact had been properly reported to the Governor at Singapore, who, as I knew, looked upon the Sultan of Kelantan as a friend, he would have taken steps to punish the abductor. I may say here that I afterwards learned from a native that after the white man in question, whose name I will not mention, had left Kota Bharu and had got safe off with the woman, the Sultan made inquiries into his conduct and seized seven other women who had been too friendly with him, caused their heads to be shaved, and nailed them all by the ear to trees, in which position they remained for several days. The sandbank, too, where I was camped, was the place on which he used to cut off men's hands, plunge the bleeding stumps into hot oil or lime, and leave them to get away as best they could when they recovered. On one occasion he had both the hands and feet of a man thus chopped off. When our conversation was ended, I asked the Sultan to give orders that a boat should be hired to me to take me to Tringanu, and another to convey my men north into Legê. He made various excuses on this latter point, saying that the men would be quite safe with him, but when I insisted he finally promised and issued orders there and then to Wan Yusuf. I thought that my difficulties were thus at an end, but I had yet to learn that this ruffianly Raja was at that very moment planning one more little surprise for me.

The story of my Malay travel may now soon be brought to a close, although I find I have not had space to tell the half of it. The boat promised me by the Sultan of Kelantan sailed over to my camp a few days later, and before we embarked I packed upon another the men whom I had promised to see out of the country, and started them down the river in advance. My own vessel was an unwieldy sort of lugger, of the kind called *tongkang* by the Chinese, and her crew consisted of a *nakhoda*, or skipper, two men and a boy. With a fair wind we swept down to the Kuala, I had the satisfaction of seeing the other boat turn her bows north towards the coast of Legê, and

I thought my adventures were all over for the time. Suddenly, however, as I was writing up my diary, I saw from the corner of my eye the *nakhoda* put the long tiller hard over to port. I did not look up, as I presumed we were just turning down the coast. A few seconds later we ran straight upon a sandbank, bows on. We were going so fast that we struck with a jerk which sent everybody sprawling along the deck. I sprang to my feet and looked around. We were on a bank in the very middle of the river, a mile above its mouth. It was out of the question that the *nakhoda* had not known of such an obstacle to navigation, and I had not a moment's doubt that he had run us aground purposely. If so, the conclusion was obvious. We could not get away till high tide next day, and therefore the situation had to be faced. I thought it better not to put him on his guard by letting him see that I had understood his plan, so I merely remarked that it was unlucky, and took the first opportunity of telling Buta and Menir Khan that we should probably be attacked during the night and that therefore I would share the watch with them. I took the first, while they slept, and turned in at ten o'clock. I had been asleep about a couple of hours and was sleeping very soundly when I became dimly aware of voices talking near the boat. I awoke but slowly, as I had been very tired, but when I heard the grinding of another boat against our own I was up in a minute and peeping through the bamboo lattice that covered the sides of the place where I was lying—a sort of deck-house, sunk a few feet below the level of the deck. What I saw was sufficient to dispel the last trace of sleep. A long canoe lay alongside, and just behind it another was floating in the semi-darkness. Both were crowded with Malays. Now, no respectable Malay is ever out at night, especially in such a locality as this. At dark they fasten themselves securely in their own houses, to be safe from marauders of all kinds. It is always a safe presumption, therefore, that any Malay found abroad at night is a bad character. The men in these boats could not possibly be other than dangerous visitors

of some kind. I saw at a glance that one man was standing at the prow of the first canoe, talking earnestly to Buta, whose watch it was, and who was answering him rapidly in excited tones, holding his rifle at the "ready." And even while I looked, I saw a man near the stern pick up a spear from the bottom of the canoe and pass it forward under the hand of the one who was standing up. In an instant I was struggling out of my rug, dragging my revolver from its holster, and yelling to Buta, "Shoot! Shoot!" He failed to do so, and as I reached the deck the first Malay was just clambering up the side, while the man behind him was swinging back his arm to hurl a spear. It was a question of seconds, but I was too near to the front man to fire. It may sound strange, but one has a great repugnance to firing a heavy revolver into a man's face when the muzzle will be touching him, even at such a moment of peril as I was then in. So I dashed my revolver sideways into his face, and I can still hear and feel the smash as it struck him. It was a very heavy weapon, made specially for me in America to take rifle cartridges, and the blow knocked the man head over heels into the water. At the same moment the Malay behind flung his spear. It passed by my head and sank deep into the deck-house. But our elevated position gave us such an advantage that the danger was virtually over, for the other men in the canoes were helpless as they sat covered by my revolver and Buta's rifle. A moment later Menir Khan had joined us, and he, of a more excitable temperament than his comrade, was for shooting the men as they crouched before us. But I shouted to them that if they did not leave instantly we should fire, the wounded man was dragged in, groaning nastily, and the canoes disappeared into the darkness. I have always felt certain that to Sri Paduka Wan Yusuf and his master I owed this unexpected visit, and I was lucky that it proved nothing worse than what the Far West knows as a "close call." Travel makes the fatalist, however, and the few seconds that saved me take on in memory an occult significance.

After this the voyage was uneventful except for a tropical storm which broke on us next morning and nearly sent us to the bottom. The boat turned out to be rotten, the sails ripped like paper, the ropes parted half-a-dozen times, and the *nakhoda* proved a mere landlubber. Buta had to stand by the jib-sheet, Menir Khan by the main-sheet, and I took the tiller for twelve consecutive hours, momentarily expecting to be pooped. On the third day we reached Tringanu, where I found the Sultan a pleasant and enlightened young man, and ten days later a little steamer landed us safe and sound at Singapore, three months and eleven days after I had left it for the opposite coast of the Perinsula.

CONCLUSION.

CONCLUSION.

AN EASTERN HOROSCOPE.

I HAVE done with the Far East as it is. It would be a dull imagination, however, that could regard the present without attempting to pierce the future. No Englishman, surely, can learn what his nation has accomplished there, without wondering what it is destined yet to do. My last thought at each place that I visited was, what will this be ten, twenty, a hundred years hence? The Far East, as I have tried to show, constitutes one distinct division of the globe—Europe, Asia, Africa, America, Australia, and the Far East, would be a fair partition of geographical interests. The sleepy Colossus of China forms one side of it; on the other, in extreme contrast, stands the passionate nation of Japan, half-intoxicated with the consciousness of its own power; the north is closed by the extremity of the vast Empire of Russia, mute and tranquil yet awhile because it has no nerve of connection with the throbbing West; at the south-west corner the energies of France are for the third time pushing her to sterile colonisation; beyond France, the Kingdom of Siam, its corruption and futility at length exposed, lies prone on the anvil of conflicting interests; beyond this, again, the remains of the mysterious Malay race dwindle on in jungles and shrinking villages; Portugal, the discoverer and once queen of the whole, now reigns over but the minutest and the most abject part; Spain possesses a fertile archipelago, only a small portion of which she has been able to conquer, and of that she has made but an object-lesson of intolerance; while the share of Germany

lies in the fact that, under the flags of other nations, her subjects work for starvation wages, and her manufacturers supply any object at any price. Finally, England is seated upon the edge of China, upon the point of a peninsula, and upon a rocky little island, while her ships plough every sea in an unending procession, her merchants do nine-tenths of the trade, her consuls hold the sway of kings, and her word is the primary condition of every change. An upheaval is now transmuting the conditions that have hitherto controlled the Far East. What is to come of it?

The answer is easy in part. Macao will disappear: it is worthless to Portugal, and no other country would take it as a gift. It will be absorbed by what remains of China, just as land once cultivated and then abandoned lapses back to the swarming jungle. I do not think that the Philippine Islands will remain Spanish. The present fever of colonisation among nations that cannot colonise will die away with the spread of democracy in Europe, and Manila will slip from the feeble grasp of a people for whom the march of time has proved exhausting. Only the excuse of a quarrel is needed to make Japan the heir. Spain, the land of armada and galleon, once the champion of Christendom and the synonym of courage, would be powerless to resist the onslaught of these Vikings of Asia. The Malays are destined to a British dominion. The future of Korea, for so long a kingdom *pauvre, perdu, et impuissant*, presents few more problems.

The influence of Russia in the Far East is about to begin. At this moment Russia and England are prepared to lay down conditions which China and Japan must obey, and which other countries would not lightly disregard. This is a new role for Russia, but when the Trans-Siberian Railway is completed, she will play it often. Vladivostok is one of the most powerfully-defended sea-ports in the world, and I regard it as certain beyond all question that Russia will have a winter port in the Far East by the time her railway connection with it is ready.

More than this; however, if the Anglo-Russian *entente* proves a durable arrangement, I have given my reasons already for thinking that Russia may well be a party to a division of interests which would bring her as her own share a much greater extent of territory and influence than she might otherwise venture to expect. Ten millions of people in Manchuria may be added to her empire, and one of the richest parts of the Far East may be opened to her for development. One thing may be taken for granted with regard to Russia—that she will not stand alone here, and consequently that if we ourselves are not in friendly alliance with her, we shall sooner or later have to face her as a member of a combination hostile to our interests. Whatever may be the relations and the possibilities of England and Russia in Europe, I can see no reason why they should not pursue a common aim in the Far East. Now that the long-prevalent superstition that China might serve us as a bulwark against a Russian advance has, at length been exploded, our statesmen will no doubt be more prepared for this alternative of friendship.

The position and prospects of France cannot be contemplated without much sympathy. This nation—“immortal and indomitable France”—is apparently entering upon a period of disturbance in Europe which will necessarily be reflected upon all her colonial enterprises. And anxiety in Paris means two things in Indo-China: first, a loosening of control over the local authorities, with the inevitable result that the more daring and unscrupulous of these get their way, and raise troublesome questions with their neighbours; and second, that there will be less ability and willingness at home to meet these troubles when they come. It is not yet generally recognised that France has never been less able to colonise with success than to-day. Not only has her population begun to decrease, after a long period of stagnation, but her finances, for so long the wonder and envy of the world, have now taken the same turn. When any anxiety is expressed upon this latter

point the reply is always to point to the marvellous resilience of France in 1871—the ease with which she paid £200,000,000 sterling to Germany. But the state of her revenues which permitted this exists no longer. Although the payment upon her public debt has been largely decreased in many directions by operations of conversion, her total expenditure has risen since 1888 by the enormous sum of two hundred millions of francs a year. Upon this point M. Leroy-Beaulieu has recently expressed himself as follows: “This situation is most grave, because it removes all immediate prospect of an amelioration of the public finances. We must not lose sight of the fact that France, unlike England, Germany, Russia, and even many other States, has now only a stationary, if not a decreasing population; that her wealth, on the other hand, and the total of her private revenues, increase much more slowly than in the past. The elasticity of private revenues, as well as of public ones, is sensibly less to-day than it was fifteen years ago, or twenty-five years, or forty years, or fifty years. . . . The political and administrative bodies of France are hugging themselves in a fatal illusion, namely, that private revenues in France continue to have the same elasticity, the same ascending force, as during the decade which followed the war of 1870–71, and during the eighteen years of economical transformation and renovation under the Second Empire. There is nothing of the kind (*Il n'en est rien*).”*

The enthusiasm of colonisation is to-day at its height in France. Apart from the fact that much of this is unquestionably due to jealousy of England, we may remember that such a fever has had its rise and its fall before, and believe that, for the above grave reasons, the present one will fade also. It is not so long since the Chamber was within a very few votes of formally abandoning Tongking. A serious complication in Europe, the triumph of a Socialist party, or a financial crisis—which is only too probable—would renew this desire to shake

* *Journal des Débats*, November 3, 1894.

off a burden which brings no corresponding advantage to the French people. Sooner or later the French masses will remember—*mutatis mutandis*—the inquiry which Victor Hugo expressed in these cutting words:—

Et battez-vous pour des Altesses
 Qui se feront des politesses
 Pendant que vous, vous pourriez ?

For “Altesses” read “députés,” and for “politesses” read “insultes,” and you have the question the French people will ask themselves when they discover that for them colonies mean nothing whatever but taxes. To this result my chapter on “The Cost of a French Colony” may perhaps contribute its mite. The sudden récall of M. de Lanessan, too, whether or not it be in connection with the railway concessions of which I have spoken, is likely to shake public confidence in colonial administration. The bearing of all this upon the horoscope of the Far East is obvious. It is difficult to believe that the French Empire of Indo-China is a permanent one, because it has behind it an unstable national policy, a decreasing population, and a shrinking revenue, while it lacks wholly the primal justification of commercial success.

What is to be the future of China? Here the chief factor of the problem—the character of the Chinese people—is so obscure that nobody who knows China at all will venture on a confident forecast. China will not over-run the world. China will not raise herself to the rank of a compact, homogeneous, powerful nation, observant of the laws which govern civilised intercourse. Japan will desire to reorganise China, and will not be permitted. These things are sure enough. But they bring us no nearer to a conclusion. My own view—which I present with due diffidence—is that the fate of China—I use the name for convenience, although, as I have said before, there is really no such thing as “China” at all—this country of rag-tag and pig-tail, will be partition among other nations. China has hitherto

“salted all the seas that run into her,” and obstruction, “the only force in China upon which it is safe to rely,” has served her well. But she has never had to face a prospect like that which lies before her to-day. I think she will ultimately go to pieces under the pressure of the conflicting interests that focus upon her. As Wingrove Cooke well said, “the whole present system of China is a hollow thing, with a hard brittle surface: we try in vain to scratch it; but some day a happy blow will shiver it. It will all go together. A Chinaman has no idea of surrendering a part to save the rest. The only question with him is, how long can it be resisted? how long can it be evaded?” The West has now come too close for any nation of the East to remain much longer—

Alloof from our mutations and unrest,
Alien to our achievements and desires.

And Japan? “With the first wind has come the blossoming of the chrysanthemum,” as the *hokku*-writer said. One thing only may prove a pitfall for this wonderful nation—her own ambition. If she makes such demands or adopts such an attitude as will bring her into acute conflict with the European Powers, her foreign affairs will be marked by bitter disappointments, and these will bring dissensions and possibly disasters into her domestic politics. No nation, least of all England, wishes to hinder the gratification of every legitimate Japanese ambition, but signs are unfortunately not wanting to show that her victories and achievements, both in peace and war, may turn her head and lure her into aspirations that can never be realised. The speech of Count Okuma, which I have quoted elsewhere, is of itself enough to give rise to these fears. Already in imagination the Japanese Press sees several provinces of northern China annexed, and even the Emperor of Japan seated upon the Dragon Throne. In sober earnest a Provisional Government for China is already prepared in Japan, and many of its officials have left for the front. “The Land of the Rising

Sun," says the *Yomiuri Shimbun*, "should not be content with anything short of the glory and grandeur of that symbol itself"! But if Japan avoids this pitfall, her future may be bright indeed. Victorious over her great enemy, rich with the spoils of peace, free from external anxieties, her population eager and able to found colonies, her revenue increasing, and her commerce rapidly developing, the first Asiatic nation in the world, and the predominant Power of the Far East, there is no reason why she should not retain all the admiration, the respect and the affection she has won.

Since my chapters on Japan passed out of the printers' hands however, her friends have learned with grief, on evidence which it is impossible to disregard, that the capture of Port Arthur was stained by the wholesale slaughter of unarmed Chinese. So far as is at present known there were several European eye-witnesses of the facts. Old men and boys were cut down; non-combatants were killed inside houses; prisoners tied together in bands were butchered and mutilated; boat-loads of fugitives were shot down or torpedoed. It may well be that further news will reduce these charges somewhat, but there seems no ground for hope that the charges may be altogether disproved. Worst of all, these atrocities are said to have been committed for several days in succession, by the troops under Count Oyama, whose proclamation commanding mercy and consideration for prisoners and non-combatants I have already reproduced. It is most earnestly to be hoped that a stringent inquiry into this matter will be set on foot at the earliest moment, in order to show the world that such barbarities are as repulsive to the best sentiments of Japan as to our own. At the same time a word of protest must be uttered against the tendency to condemn the entire Japanese people for the acts of some of their soldiers. To begin with, the soldiers are drawn from the class which has had least opportunity of imbibing the spirit of civilisation of which the Japanese Government has given so many striking examples. Moreover, the

horrors inflicted by the Chinese in Port Arthur upon their Japanese prisoners might be held to excuse a fury of revenge, if this had not been permitted to last. And such wholesale killing is no new thing in Eastern warfare. There were scenes in the suppression of the Indian mutiny for which the British people would be sorry to be held responsible. Skobelev slaughtered thousands of Turkomans at Geok Tepe on January 24, 1881.* The "incident" of Peijdeh was not much better. And after the fall of Son-tay in the French war in Tongking there was a night of equal horror.† Moreover, the same journal which has been foremost in exposing the atrocities of Port Arthur once had occasion to denounce the French in similar terms for the shooting of defenceless Chinese after the naval massacre of Foochow. And to say nothing of the awful times of the Commune, it is commonly believed that the Franco-German war produced scenes that both armies would gladly forget. Therefore, however bad the story of the fall of Port Arthur may prove to be, let us not pass a verdict of guilty upon the whole Japanese nation. The extraordinary fury of the Japanese armed coolies and soldiers was due in great part to the indiscretion of an officer. It was known that three Japanese spies caught in Chin-Chow had first been subjected to the torture of bone-

* "At 4 in the afternoon Skobelev led his cavalry through the breach, and ordered both horse and foot to pursue the retreating enemy and to give no quarter. This command was obeyed by both with savage precision till darkness fell—by the infantry (six companies) for a distance of seven miles, by the cavalry (a division of dragoons and four *sotnias* of Cossacks) for eleven miles, supported by a battery of horse artillery with long range guns. Eight thousand persons of both sexes and all ages were mercilessly cut down and slain. 'On the morning after the battle they lay in rows like freshly-mown hay, as they had been swept down by the mitrailleuses and cannon.'" The Hon. George N. Curzon, "Russia in Central Asia," p. 82. •

† "That was a terrible night in Son-tay. The Turcos had entered, with comparatively little opposition, by the eastern gate, and they admittedly killed men, women, and children—every living thing they came across. The French troops were not so bad, but the butchery of Chinamen and crop-headed Annamese (the Prince's men) was sickening." J. G. Scott (Special Correspondent in Tongking at the time, and recently British Minister in Bangkok), "France and Tongking," p. 85. See also C. B. Norman, "Tonkin, or France in the Far East," p. 245.

crushing and then burned alive. Shortly afterwards three Japanese soldiers were either captured or killed during the march on Port Arthur, and the advance guard found their bodies. They were decapitated, their hands cut off, their bodies ripped open and their livers torn out. Instead of burying the bodies, the officer in command caused them to be laid out upon a platform by the roadside, and the whole army thus saw them as it marched past. The consequent blood-thirst became so uncontrollable that the Japanese officers could only protect the people after the fall of Port Arthur by posting notices upon houses containing fugitives, saying, "The people of this residence must not be killed," and even finally by pinning labels upon the breasts of Chinese, bearing the saving words, "This person must not be killed." For my own part, the news is beyond comprehension. That Count Oyama and his officers should have allowed days to be spent in butchering prisoners and captives—as is asserted—is almost unimaginable. Until this news came, every correspondent with the Japanese forces had paid a high tribute to their discipline and humanity, while the Japanese Red Cross Society was positively held up as an example to our own. And in the latest papers from Japan I find this item among the notes from the front: "Some Japanese coolies who murdered a Chinese in the Liau-tung Peninsula were summarily executed by order of General Oyama."

The kingdom of Siam is another uncertain factor in the future of the Far East. I have given many reasons for believing that there is no hope whatever of the duration of an independent monarchy there. Sooner or later some stronger hand will have to take the helm. The ambition of France has decided that the hand shall be hers. England, on the contrary, is definitely pledged to the maintenance of Siamese autonomy and integrity. Thus the ground is prepared for grave events. Every day that passes, however, and many incidents that have occurred even since my chapters on Siam were written, deepen my conviction

that our responsible statesmen have not realised either the difficulties or the dangers of the situation, and that they are still cherishing hopes of Siamese action which are inevitably destined to a rude disappointment. The sad death of the Crown Prince, too, has intensified every element of uncertainty. His life and future formed the one remaining object of the King's devotion: now that he is dead the enfeebled monarch will withdraw himself more than ever from the task of attempting to direct and control the crooked aims and forcible-feeble characters that are contending around him. The appointment of the new Crown Prince represents the triumph of the Second Queen, a lady of far greater ambition and determination than her senior rival, and a life-long devotee of intrigue. Her eldest son was born on New Year's Day, 1880, and his name and title are Somdetch Chow Fah Maha Vachiravudh. The name "Thoon Kramom Tho," which has been telegraphed from Bangkok by correspondents obviously unfamiliar with the Siamese Court, is merely a familiar abbreviation of a birth-title, and not the Prince's name at all. Prince Maha Vachiravudh has been studying in England for several years in the home of a private family of much educational distinction, and he is described by those who know him best as a youth of much amiability and intelligence, though the circumstances of his life and the comparative obscurity to which he has been purposely relegated have not been such as to develop in him any marked strength of character. He is, of course, like his late brother, the nephew of Prince Devawongse and Prince Svasti. The chief danger that awaits him is the deterioration which must almost inevitably follow upon his abrupt withdrawal from the excellent influences which have surrounded him in England, and his exposure, at an age when these cannot have produced a permanent effect, to the ruinous and debilitating life of the Royal Palace of Bangkok. As for the "great reform" just announced, "a Legislative Council consisting of the Ministers and at least twelve nobles, who are to hold deliberations and pass new laws, with the Royal sanction,

or, in the event of the Sovereign's illness, or absence from any other cause, by a two-thirds majority without such sanction," I fear it can only be regarded as fresh dust thrown in the eyes of Europe. As I have explained, there are no such persons as "nobles" in Siam, and the Legislative Council will to all intents be the same band of royal half-brothers who form the Cabinet, grouped under another name. The news is more important as showing the King's public admission of his own physical exhaustion, and his determination to relinquish even the pretence of holding the reins of government. He was not strong enough to announce his successor with his own lips.

There remains only the last house of the horoscope of the Far East. England—what is to be her future there? The aim of this book has been to show that we have the right and the opportunity, and therefore the duty, greatly to extend our influence and our trade—in a word, our Empire—in this great division of the globe. The figures of our predominant interest, which I have given in every case where they could be obtained, speak for themselves. No other Power can present statistics which even approach them. And the future, if we grasp it now, will utterly dwarf the past. The rest of the world is parcelled out like an allotment-ground. In the Far East alone an unworked mine awaits us. A distinguished French traveller has well described the consideration which should weigh with the statesmen of the hour. "It is in Asia once more that will be decided the destinies of the world. In Asia will be founded and will increase great empires, and whoever succeeds in making his voice heeded in the Far East will be able also to speak in dominating accents to Europe. . . . *Be Asiatic, there lies the future!*" *

I am profoundly convinced that this is true. The years that I have given to the Far East have taught it as their supreme lesson, and the highest ambition of my life would be gratified

* Prince Henri d'Orleans, "Around Tonkin," 1894, p. 426.

if I could believe at the close that I had helped to teach it to my countrymen.

It is no cant to say that the British public is a mass of people with a conscience. It is capable of supporting a Government that should resign an advantage we might secure from a rival by force of arms, for no other reason than that to seize it would be an act of injustice. And its enthusiasm cannot be secured for any new Imperial movement unless, besides the expediency, the right can be shown and the benefits to be conferred upon the nations we bring under an extended dominion. Therefore any appeal to the British public, in whose hands for good or evil the destinies of the Empire now rest, must address itself in no small part to their conscience. Herein lies the strongest hope of British extension in the Far East. As Mr. H. H. Johnston has recently said, "the British Empire is not merely the heritage of thirty-eight millions of pink-and-white Englishmen, but it is a league of peace and commerce in which black and yellow men are concerned." * And the extension of our authority over these alien races is for them an unmitigated blessing. A sharp-eyed foreign critic who has lately returned from a journey round the Empire has declared this in impressive words. "All these new countries, which are so many outlets for the commerce of the world, are not monopolised by the English for their own use only. People from other nations may go there and settle, without having any formality to go through or any foreign taxes to pay. They may go on speaking their own language, practising their own religion, and may enjoy every right of citizenship. And if they are not too stubborn or too old to learn, they may lay to heart many good lessons in those nurseries of liberty. If I have not succeeded in proving that in spite of their hundred and one foibles the Anglo-Saxons are the only people on this earth who enjoy perfect liberty, I have lost my time." * When a native race comes under British control it receives immediately a birth-gift—Freedom, "heaven-sent, red-tape-bound," straight from Downing

* Max O'Rell, "John Bull and Co.," p. 318.

Street." It has been my fortune to see at close quarters almost all the civilised nations of the world, and most of the great colonies, and the result is that I believe in Englishmen above all other men, and in British rule above all other rule. Therefore the British Empire is to me the most important impersonal consideration on earth, and the transmission to our heirs of the legacy of our fathers the greatest responsibility.

There are many joyful signs that a new era has dawned. No leading statesman would venture to say to-day what Cobden said in 1836: "The colonies, the army, the navy . . . are only appendages of our aristocratical government. John Bull has for the next fifty years the task set him of cleansing his house from this stuff." The recognition of the British *Drang* which no man either created or can hinder, the imperative need of new markets, the sight of the marvellous progress of native races under our flag, the just alarm at the advance of our rivals, the awakening at last to an appreciation of the fact that powerful and jealous nations are plotting for our inheritance—these are bringing about a change, before it is too late, in the minds of the inhabitants of Great Britain. But the best sign of all, and therefore the most hopeful portent in the heavens of this Far Eastern horoscope, is that a Liberal Prime Minister has declared to all the world that the "party of a small England, of a shrunk England, of a degraded England, of a neutral England, of a submissive England, has died."

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The National Observer.—"Few will hesitate to acknowledge that his ['An Unwritten Chapter of Japanese Life'] is a contribution towards the solution of a great and grave question for which, after many days, the philanthropist and the legislator may be duly grateful. . . . On many other points of great interest in this excellent book we can touch but lightly. . . . Mr. Norman courts the severest criticism by adopting a most ambitious title. We can pay him no higher compliment than to say that he comes nearer to giving us a real insight into contemporary 'Japanese manners, morals (immorals), administration and politics,' than any other prowler with camera and pen has done."

The New York Tribune.—"The author of this book had unusual opportunities for acquiring information concerning the actual acts of that very modern progressive—or at least evolutionary—movement, which has made Japan the source and centre of so much interest. He has used these opportunities wisely and well, and has given his readers what no other work on Japan affords, namely, a series of clearly drawn pictures of the country and people as they appear to-day, and as they are affected by the changes which have been occurring with bewildering rapidity of late years."

The North China Daily News.—"A traveller who wants to know what the real Japan is will be thoroughly equipped if he takes with him this book, Chamberlain's *Things Japanese*, and Satow's *Guide*."

The Japan Daily Mail.—"Mr. Henry Norman differed in two essential respects from the crowd of bookmakers who have found in Japan material to fill their pages: he possessed the practised capacities of a trained writer who knows exactly how to collect and digest information, and he was so thoroughly in earnest that his whole time and energies during his stay in this country were devoted to getting as far as possible below the surface of everything he saw and heard. We are not surprised, therefore, to find that his book, 'The Real Japan,' occupies a unique place. Within the limits which he sets himself, he stands at the head of all previous writers in respect of accuracy and fulness of information. Nobody had previously told us what he tells about Japanese Journalism, about Japanese Justice, about Japanese Education, about Japanese Arts and Crafts, about Japanese Women, and about the Japanese Yoshiwara. He has established his right to the ambitious title chosen for his work. . . . To him belongs the great credit of having taught many an unlearned lesson to the oldest resident among us, and of having taught it in words so well chosen and picturesque that they impart a charm to the driest subject."