

stones. It might have gone hard with them, even if they had escaped the fate of the proto-martyr, had not a crowd of the poorest slaves, both men and women, who at that hour were waiting for admission, formed a guard, opening their umbrellas to shield them from the missiles of the enemy, and so escorted them home. It was a great tribute indeed to the white lady, as well as an astonishing revelation of these poor folks' valiant loyalty. At this time Mrs. Leonowens was daily in very real peril and had to bar and double-lock her doors and windows. She had almost been reduced, at one moment, to taking refuge with the English Consul.

However, the storm blew over. The king could not do without her. He found once more that he had met his master, and gave in with a curiously plaintive recognition at once of her indispensable value and of her demoniac inflexibility. "M'am," he said when she was once more installed at her desk, "you are one great difficulty. I have much pleasure and favour on you, but you are too obstinate. You are not wise. Wherefore are you so difficult? You are only a woman. It is very bad you can be so strong-headed. Will you now have any objection to write Sir John and tell him I am his very good friend?" She had no objection whatever to say that much, but said no more. He read her letter, grunted, and went out and kicked the slave his foster-brother. He was in his best humour all the rest of that day.

So the episode ended. But the long strain had been too much even for her. Her health broke down and she came far indeed within the shadow of the gates of death. It was only her indomitable will and her inveterate habit of thwarting Mongkut that saved her. With the kindly thought of making her passage easy for her, he sent a message, delivered when she was just barely conscious, to say that she need in no case be anxious about her little boy, for he would bring him up himself. No oxygen pumped into her could have knocked at the door of her vital forces, then fast sinking into the long sleep, with half so wakeful a summons as this well meant sponge of vinegar and hyssop. Rather than commit her boy