

majesties of Siam, like every other man in the country, have to pass through the order of the priesthood. The Siamese priests are a curious lot ; they take a great yellow wallet on their shoulders, and start off in the morning to beg their daily bread. They don't speak a word, but go pacing along the streets, and every householder gives them something. Sometimes a rich man will bestow a fowl or a joint of meat, sometimes they receive nothing but a few spoonfuls of rice or some fruit ; but all, both rich and poor, are ready to give, and by the time the priest reaches the end of his morning's walk his wallet is pretty heavy. Every man, from the king to the peasant, has to go through this sort of thing, day after day, for three or four months, I believe."

"But why?" asked Mary Maine, gently.

"To teach them humility, they say. The poor souls go barefoot and bareheaded, and look forlorn enough as they walk along, dumb as door-posts. A few days of that sort of work would take the pride out of *me* pretty soon."

"They are ignorant savages," said Mrs. Wingate, with a little toss of her head.

"Not they, ma'am ! They have laws and customs which would astonish you. They have splendid dresses, woven and embroidered with silk ; they value old china, and give prices for it which would be called large even in London. They send their sons to England now and then to be educated. But, however grand these young folks think themselves, on their return they have to take their yellow wallet, and do their turn at begging."

"Such queer notions !" murmured the aunt.

"But there *is* sense in the plan, don't you think?" urged Frank. "Mary, my dear, you are going to honour me and bless me by marrying me, so it is only fair to tell you that I am like-minded with the kings of Siam, inasmuch as I admire people who have learned to think humbly of themselves. So if, when we settle down together, I get 'up-ish' by reason of my good fortune, and forget that I am but an inferior officer waiting for a ship, just make me a yellow sack,