

an old friend of his, that the latter should assume the post of Siamese plenipotentiary at the court of France. He chose now to change his mind, preferring to be represented there by a native Siamese embassy. His secretary was coolly requested to appease Sir John. The new arrangement was to be attributed to the advice of the English Consul, or, if she liked, to her own; in short to anything she chose, that would serve to justify the impeccable Mongkut. Now this was too large an order. She had often before made a shift to get him out of similar scrapes, by harmless means, generally at the cost of an infinitude of pains to herself. But she would not lie for him. He was furious; emptied upon her head his whole really formidable alabaster box of highly-scented invective. Finding he could not make her budge an inch, he let her go away to her house; then drew up and sent her after a day or two an extraordinary list of charges. It included such damning items as the theft of a book from the royal library—the book was afterwards found under a pillow in one of his innumerable sleeping-rooms—disrespect to the sacred majesty of his person shown in sitting when he stood, pointing the finger at him,—I well believe this charge—and calling him a “bad man” and so forth. All this, he said, he would lay before the British Consul, if she did not obey him at once. The document was brought to her house by a native secretary accompanied by a crowd of weeping female slaves from the palace, who, in the name of their mistresses, all the wives of His Omnipotence the Ogre, besought her to yield and flee from the wrath to come. The secretary tried to bribe her too, and after two hours vainly spent in raising his bids went away swearing that she was insatiable, a mere daughter of the horse-leech, whose price soared out of sight beyond the fee-simple of a hundred modest Siamese salvations. But still worse was to come. The king in a fit of uncontrollable rage had roared: “Will none of my people rid me of this woman?” and one fine morning, when they appeared as usual before the palace gate, she and her boy found themselves facing an ugly mob of roughs and soldiers who drove them back and picked up